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International Affairs

Trade Team to U.S. Focuses on Food Products, Hi-Tech

93AS0178F Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS*
in English 25 Oct 92 p 17

[Text] New Delhi—A ten-member delegation of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) will go to the United States on a six-day tour from Nov 8 to enhance trade and investment opportunities between the two countries.

Talking to newsmen here, the IACC president, Dr Abhijit Sen, said the delegation would specifically focus on three major areas of business—food processing including seafood, hi-tech electronics, computer, telecommunication products and software and timber and lumber products.

He said the delegation would visit the states of Washington and Oregon and would endeavour to explore business and investment opportunities between India and these two states.

Referring to the response of the U.S. businessmen to India's market-friendly open door economic policy, Dr Sen said "it has definitely made a positive impact in the American corporate world and they are looking forward to make substantial investment in wide range of industries."

In this context he said a high-level trade delegation from the United States led by the Governor of Georgia, where most of the leading American companies are based, would visit India at the end of the year to explore investment opportunities and joint venture prospects in this country.

Dr Sen said another high-powered official trade delegation would visit India from Jan 26.

Referring to growing competition all over the world to woo direct foreign investment from fund-surplus developed countries, he said "India will have to work hard to attract U.S. investment and enhance its position in the highly competitive American market."

"This is specially so in the context of formation of North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) which opens up the American market to another third world country, namely Mexico," he said.

In reply to a query on "unresolved irritants" affecting the economic ties between India and the United States, Dr Sen said "difference in perceptions on some issues like intellectual property rights, patent law, Dunkel draft on GATT negotiations do exist between the two countries, but these should not cause hurdles on the further bilateral expansion of trade, commerce and investment."

Dr Sen hoped these would be solved amicably and said trade between India and United States was bound to grow in view of India's "bold" steps to integrate its economy into the global mainstream. PTI

Minister's Visit to Central Asia Assessed

93AS0165A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
20 Oct 92 p 7

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 19—The ten day visit by the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, to three Central Asian Republics—Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan—has helped consolidate India's ties with these countries, sources in the Ministry of External Affairs say.

Mr. Bhatia returned from his tour on Saturday. Prior to Mr. Bhatia's visit, India had worked out framework agreements aimed at institutionalising bilateral relations with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan during the visits of the Kazakh President, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, and the Kyrgyz President, Mr. A. Akaev earlier this year.

The agreements which Mr Bhatia signed during his recent visit cover cultural exchanges, technical assistance, banking and small scale industry as well as diplomacy. Proposals have also been made for establishing a direct air link between India and these countries sources say.

And the momentum in upgrading relations is expected to be maintained with the forthcoming visit to these Republics by the Deputy Minister of Commerce Mr. Salman Khurshed, at the end of this month.

Sources attribute three factors as being conducive for strengthening bilateral relations. First, the Central Asian Republics which are focusing their attention on revitalising their economies feel that a strong relationship with India could promote these efforts. In fact, large quantities of consumer goods from India still line the shelves in several stores in these republics, sources say.

India is seen as a country that shares concern over the spread of Islamic fundamentalism which these secular republics fear. More so, after the politically destabilising Islamic upheaval in Tadjikistan. These countries—part of the former Soviet Union—face along with India the threat of externally supported terrorism and subversion.

Significantly, all the three republics which Mr. Bhatia visited supported India's views on Kashmir calling for a resolution of the problem bilaterally without internationalising it.

The emphasis on the need for economic development without fanning Islamic revivalism is evident from the pattern of the external economic relations which these countries are developing. It is Turkey which appears to have made maximum economic gains in Central Asia—mainly through investments in the oil sector. However, the economic ties of these countries with Iran are also improving, sources say.

India's potential for an economic relationship with the Central Asian Republics is closely tied to the rail link which these republics are establishing with Iran. India feels that it can cut down the high costs involved in transit by utilising the services of Iranian ports and the overland route which Iran is establishing with these republics.

UNI reports: India and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kryghyzstan have expressed serious concern over the efforts of some countries to spread "religious fundamentalism" in the region through the use of "subversion and terrorism." They have resolved to jointly fight the menace of fundamentalism and terrorism to protect and safeguard the "secular outlook" in the area, official sources said.

Leaders in the three republics told Mr. Bhatia that they faced the threat of religious fundamentalism from the neighbouring nations and that they were determined to maintain their secular characters.

French Foreign Minister on Ties

93AS0160A Madras THE HINDU in English
5 Oct 92 p 8

[Excerpts] Indo-France relations are going to be a complicated mix. The prospects of warmth and increased interaction have, undoubtedly, brightened as a result of the conscious efforts by the two sides culminating in the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to Paris and his talks with the French President, Mr. Francois Mitterrand. At the same time, new inhibiting factors arising from France's latest stand on issues like the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), cannot be wished away.

This impression stands out in the written replies of the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Ronald Dumas to the questions, submitted by K.K. Katyal during his recent visit to Paris. Because of Mr. Dumas's preoccupation with the developments concerning the integrative process in Europe, in the wake of the French referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, a personal interview could not materialise. He was away to New York for the first two of the three days of Mr. Narasimha Rao's trip to France and saw him on the third day. That was the day when his busy schedule became tighter still, as the British Prime Minister, Mr. John Major suddenly arrived for unscheduled talks with Mr. Mitterrand.

The questions and answers could be broadly divided into two parts—one, the direction in which Europe is likely to move, the shape it may take, the new mechanisms and instruments that are to be devised and two, Indo-French relations. Mr. Dumas chose not to respond to queries on domestic political affairs of France—perhaps because he felt that as Foreign Minister, he needed to restrict himself to external relations. Those questions related to (1) the implications of the narrow margin of the "Yes" vote for Mr. Mitterrand, who had completely identified himself with the Maastricht Treaty in the referendum; (2) the meaning of the split behaviour of the French voters—with the elite and cities voting for the Treaty and the farmers and the countryside against; and (3) France's view of the human rights problem and the tendency to link it with questions of aid to the developing countries.

For years France has resisted the pressures on it to sign the NPT. Lately, its policymakers, in their wisdom and taking into account the totality of the international situation (including the unstated factors like the ascendancy of the

U.S. in the politically unipolar world) chose to sign the treaty. The zeal of the new convert was evident in its dealings with others like India now. Mr. Dumas was categorical that Indo-French cooperation in the nuclear field was possible in a new framework, whereby nuclear exports were authorised only to those countries which would agree to subject the totality of their activities to the guarantees of the International Agency for Atomic Energy.

The implications of this stand for the prospects of the supply of enriched uranium to the Tarapur Atomic Power Station are clear (though this point is not touched upon by Mr. Dumas). After a year, the contract for the French supply will expire. Viewed in the light of France's new stand, the extension of the present arrangement would not be possible. The two sides were engaged in discussions for months, after the French Ambassador in New Delhi drew the External Affairs Ministry's attention to the implications of the new stand of his Government. The issue was also taken up by the officials in Paris during Mr. Rao's visit. India has enriched uranium stocks for two years after the expiry of the contract and, also, is in a position to use an indigenous substitute, mixed oxide fuel. If India resorts to this course, the Tarapur plant would not be subject to the safeguards of the type applicable now. Will the conversion of a safeguarded nuclear power plant into an unsafe-guarded facility be in tune with France's new concern for non-proliferation? That is the question India has posed to France.

Otherwise, Mr. Dumas is optimistic about the growth of bilateral ties—he pointedly refers to the agreed decision to "intensify the rhythm of bilateral ministerial visits" and to increase mutual consultation at the international fora. Then there is a word of praise for the "courageous" economic reforms of the Rao Government.

As for the future shape of Europe, Mr. Dumas takes a positive view of the French referendum. What matters to him is the final outcome—"this is the law of democracy." Apparently he is not worried by the narrow margin of victory but does concede the need for clarifications and explanations on European unification.

The questions and Mr. Dumas's replies are as follows: [passage omitted]

[Katyal] The bilateral relations between India and France have been marked by ups and downs. In the last two or three years, the warmth and interaction have not been as intense as they were in the preceding years. What are the reasons for it? How, in your opinion, a steady relationship, based on fruitful contacts, could be maintained?

[Dumas] Relations between France and India are age-old and have always been good. They were reinforced in the course of the Eighties, a period during which President Mitterrand visited India twice, in 1982 and 1989. It was also during this period that two important events, namely, the Festival of India in France and the Festival of France in India, were held.

It is all the same true that the last two years have not added much to relations between our two countries. This can be

partly explained by the serious internal problems which India has had to face during this period.

Sustained dialogue is necessary between France and India and Mr. Rao's visit to France has been a decisive stage in this connection. We have decided to intensify the rhythm of bilateral ministerial visits in particular and to increase our diplomatic concertation within the multilateral framework.

[Katyal] The potential of trade and investment between India and France has not been exploited fully. What are the reasons for it and how could the present deficiency be remedied? Are there some problems about the terms of trade, etc.?

[Dumas] You are right, we still have a lot to accomplish before our commercial exchanges attain the extent they deserve. France salutes the courageous economic reform policy initiated by Mr. Rao and regards it as an encouragement to the development of our bilateral trade and to an increase in the level of French investment in India. Moreover, we have several projects for cooperation in sectors such as telecommunications, energy and electronic equipment in airports.

We should also give a greater place to small and medium-scale industries in our bilateral trade in order to ensure greater stability to our trade with India.

Lastly, one should also take note of the signing of a convention of non-double taxation during Mr. Rao's visit. This text should facilitate an increase in French investments in India.

[Katyal] France has acceded to the NPT now, the delay suggesting that it had reservations about it initially. How does your Government view India's stand against the NPT because of its discriminatory character? What are France's parameters for the transfer of technology to India?

[Dumas] France signed the NPT on August 3, 1992. This decision was in line with the logic of the French position as regards non-proliferation. The formalisation of our commitment to the NPT has allowed us to fully shoulder our responsibilities in contributing to the reinforcement and universal application of the Treaty. Moreover, this is the meaning behind the disarmament and arms control plan which was presented by France on June 3, 1991.

We understand the desire of the Indian authorities to have access to these technologies for pacific ends in order to ensure the development of their economy and it is equally important to us to see a great country like India associating itself with the consensus in the field of non-proliferation.

As a logical consequence of its decision to sign the NPT, France, from now on, will apply the rule of full scope safeguards whereby a supplier country will only authorise nuclear exports to those countries having made the totality of their nuclear activities subject to the guarantees of the International Agency for Atomic Energy. It is within such a framework that Franco-Indian cooperation in the nuclear domain can be pursued.

[Katyal] What is France's view of the problems in the Indian sub-continent? On Indo-Pakistan issues and Kashmir, for instance. On the instigation of terrorism in India from across the border.

[Dumas] We encourage the dialogue between India and Pakistan in order to arrive at the necessary appeasement of tensions in the sub-continent. In connection with this, we are very happy with the bold measures taken by both countries in the past few months. I shall specially emphasise the mutual agreement on non-attack of nuclear plants and the declaration forbidding the use of chemical weapons.

[Katyal] What are your views on the role of the U.N. and its peace-keeping operations? There is a widespread impression that some of the tasks, though executed in the name of the world body, were not conducted under its auspices. What is France's stand on the demand for democratising the U.N.—for expanding the Security Council so that its composition is in tune with the present-day realities?

[Dumas] France congratulates itself on its role in the field of peace-keeping.

On September 1, 1992, the U.N. had around 44,000 men put at its disposal by 66 countries and deployed in 12 different sites. This shows how much the international community is concerned with peace keeping today. France, for its part, has played a preponderant role in this area. It deployed a total of 5,000 men and holds, as of today, the first rank among the States which have sent troops.

Our country deeply wishes to keep up its commitment in this field. Thus, as pointed out by the President of the Republic at the U.N. Security Council summit meeting held on January 31, 1992, France has promised to put 1,000 men at the disposal of the U.N. within 48 hours. The application of this measure started with the Yugoslavian crisis. France contributed substantially to peace efforts in Yugoslavia by sending to Bosnia, and then to Croatia, 3,000 soldiers who were deployed in the blue U.N. Pavilion, UNPROFOR [United Nations Protection Force], which is under the command of an Indian General and French Deputy-General.

Our country has also shown a keen interest in the proposals of the U.N. Secretary-General regarding preventive diplomacy measures, especially those concerning the application of the progressive means of intervention for the U.N. This would help the U.N. to act with maximum efficiency in situations where peace would seem to be threatened.

Finally, France would like the example of the U.N. to be followed by regional organisations in future in order to increase the means put at the disposal of men to ensure their security in all continents at a time like the present when history is undergoing sudden acceleration.

Analyst Discusses Relations With Germany
 93AS0156A Madras *THE HINDU in English*
 16 Oct 92 p 9

[Article by K.K. Katyal; quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 15—The Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, is going to Berlin to attend the funeral of the former West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, as a special envoy of the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao—in what is seen as a gesture to the departed statesman as also to his country, Germany.

Willy Brandt belonged to the Social Democratic party (SDP), now in the opposition, but is being given a state funeral and accorded other honours because of his stature and his role in Germany and in world affairs. The Prime Minister's action in sending his personal envoy has to be seen in that context.

In matters relating to their top leaders, the Governments in India and Germany have not gone by narrow protocol or partisan considerations. Last year, the German Government sent Mr. Genscher, the then Foreign Minister and number two in the ruling hierarchy, to attend the funeral of the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, who was in opposition at the time of his assassination.

Special regard: Brandt was shown special regard in India for several reasons—as the architect of *ostpolitik* (the policy of reconciliation with the then East Germany)—a significant contributory factor for the big-power detente—as the foremost statesman of the post-war period, for which the recognition came in the form of the Nobel Prize for Peace.

His work after retirement from active politics—as chairman of the North-South Commission on Development and Cooperation, and the report 'Ensuring Survival', produced by it, had a close relevance to the concerns and priorities of the Indian foreign policy. His presence at the international fora during discussions on important issues like disarmament, development, democracy and peace was viewed with appreciation in India.

JNU doctorate: In May 1990, the Jawaharlal Nehru University conferred on him the Honorary Doctorate of Laws. At the special convocation on that occasion, Brandt outlined his philosophy thus: 'The North, the South, the East and the West are sterile labels. Since we are increasingly confronted with problems that affect all humanity we have to shed the old labels and pursue the one-world concept'. Also, he was a member of the international jury of the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development.

If the Prime Minister's gesture means a recognition of Brandt's role on matters, close to the heart of India's policy makers, it is also a confirmation of the special ties with the contemporary Germany. The relations between the two countries have grown steadily to touch the present level of warmth—as shown by Mr. Rao's decision last year to choose Bonn for his first trip abroad as Prime Minister, and the plans for the German Chancellor, Dr. Helmut Kohl's visit to India in February next

year. He was to come here last month but the visit was postponed because of his preoccupations with the affairs of the European Community.

This is so even though the level of cooperation in trade and investment between the two countries is not commensurate with the vastness of Germany's resources (despite the demand made on the federal Government by the eastern part, the former GDR). That there is considerable promise for further development of bilateral relations is recognised by the two sides. Because of its emergence as the leading member of the E.C., Germany's importance for India is all the more greater.

Regional Affairs

Pakistan Charge on Punjab Killings Refuted
 93AS0158A Madras *THE HINDU in English*
 20 Oct 92 p 1

[Article by Kesava Menon; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Islamabad, Oct. 19—While confirming that two of the persons killed in an encounter between terrorists and security forces in Punjab on October 15 were Pakistani nationals, the Indian High Commission here has contradicted a Pakistan Government press note which sought to show that these persons had been 'murdered' by Indian intelligence agencies.

In a statement issued here the Indian High Commission said that the language of the Pakistan press note was unfortunate. "The facts are wrong. There are several discrepancies between the handout and the information given in their visa applications," the High Commission said before enumerating these discrepancies.

According to the High Commission statement the Indian security forces had intercepted six terrorists travelling in two Maruti cars with a large quantity of sophisticated weapons near Kanga Raian village in Jalandhar district. In the encounter the occupants of the two cars were killed. Two of the killed terrorists were identified as Pakistani nationals.

It is understood that the External Affairs Ministry had taken up the matter with Pakistan's Acting High Commissioner in New Delhi, Mr. Shahid Malik, on October 17. Yesterday the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shahryar Khan, raised the matter with the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. S.K. Lambah. Later the Indian Deputy High Commissioner Mr. Bal Anand was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and handed over a protest note.

Discrepancies: While the Pakistan government seemed uncertain about the identity of one of the persons involved, Mr. Habibullah, they claimed that the other, Mr. Intikhab Ahmed Zia, was in India with valid travel documents and that he had been murdered. A relative of Mr. Zia had earlier gone to the press stating that Mr. Zia had mysteriously vanished. But there are several discrepancies between his version and that of the Government and between these and the visa application forms submitted by

Mr. Zia and Mr. Habibullah. As regards Mr. Habibullah, no relative or anyone else has made any enquiries and the Pakistan Government note itself admits that it is conducting investigations "about the other alleged Pakistani national Mr. Habibullah who was reportedly also assassinated on October 15, 1992."

According to the Pakistan Government version, Mr. Zia, an administrative officer in a private hospital in Lahore, had travelled to New Delhi on May 21 at the start of a trip to Nepal, Thailand and Singapore. He was said to have been in constant touch with his family over telephone and had reportedly informed them on May 28 that he was on his way to the airport to board a Kathmandu bound flight. Since then his family had no intimation about his whereabouts.

The Indian High Commission here has pointed out five discrepancies between the Pakistan Government note and the visa applications of the two Pakistanis. Whereas the handout and newspaper accounts of press conferences given by Mr. Zia's brother-in-law mention that Mr. Zia was an administrative officer in a private hospital in Lahore, his profession in the visa application is given as "Business, Building Construction Lahore."

The High Commission also said that neither the Pakistan Government note nor Mr. Zia's relatives had mentioned that he wanted to meet some relatives in India which was mentioned as the "object of visit" in the visa application. A letter from his brother-in-law describes the purpose as "pleasure-cum-business." Similarly, the Pakistan Government note said that the two persons reached Delhi on May 21 and were leaving on May 28. The transit visas issued to them, however, were only for three days.

As regards Mr. Zia's onward trip, the Pakistan Government note said his destination was Nepal but his brother-in-law's letter stated that his destination was Sri Lanka.

The handout was silent about Mr. Habibullah who was referred to as the "other alleged Pakistani national" about whom the Government of Pakistan was still conducting investigations.

Article Proposes New Treaty With Sri Lanka

BK1211141192 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
in English 2 Nov 92 p 13

[Article by Umashankar Phadnis: "Hammering Out a New Equation"]

[Text] With the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan accord gradually fading into the oblivion, the two countries need to hammer out a new equation so that the relations between them are not plagued by avoidable irritants as they tend to do now. Indeed a tentative suggestion has been thrown up by the Sri Lankan President, Mr Ranasinghe Premadasa, that the accord should be replaced by a treaty of friendship and cooperation, more or less modelled on the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971 but it has yet to come up as an agenda for earnest talks between the two governments.

Going by the observation of President S.D. Sharma at the banquet hosted by him for Mr Premadasa during his recent

visit here that the accord had been a sincere attempt to solve the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, it would seem that India continues yet to swear by it although neither of the two signatories are on the scene. And, given the changes which have taken place not only in the two countries but also in the strategic environment affecting the security of the two countries, it is a moot point whether the two leaders would have desired a continuance of the accord as it stood in 1987.

A curious aspect of the accord relevant in this context is that quite contrary to the normal format of such agreements between two countries, the 1987 accord does not specify a time span for its validity. This seems to suggest that the accord was conceived as an ephemeral agreement between the two countries, an ad hoc arrangement to cope with a situation of urgent concern to the respective security perception of the two countries.

Such a surmise flows from the Rajiv-Jayewardene letters appended to the accord which explain not only the context for the accord but also the rationale for the follow-up action by the respective governments specified in it.

Looking back at the consequences of the accord, it cannot be said that it augured well either for Sri Lanka or for India. In Sri Lanka it proved to be a catalytic element in the then incipient JVP [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna] insurgency. So far as India is concerned the commitment embodied in the accord that it would render assistance in disarming the Tamil militants to help Sri Lanka preserve its territorial integrity led to the deployment of the IPKF [Indian Peacekeeping Force].

It needs to be noted that there has been a great deal of post-mortem on the debacle that ensued. What emerges out of it all is that the responsibility for it lay squarely at the door-step of political leadership. Its willing to strike but afraid to wound direction to the IPKF betrayed a gross ignorance of political ground a reality of the spectrum of Sri Lankan Tamil political trends.

It is not of great consequence now whether it was the RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] or the Ministry of External Affairs which induced a myopic view of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. Even so, there can be no glossing over the fact that policy-makers chose to look the other way when the LTTE launched on its rampage against the other Tamil groups beginning with its slaughter of the TELO [Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization] cadres in 1983. Had there been a realistic appraisal of the true character of the LTTE, it is possible to argue that Amirthalingam, Padmanabhan of the EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] and eventually Rajiv Gandhi himself would not have been LTTE's victims.

Political opinion in Tamil Nadu has been cited as the reason for the Centre's confused appraisal of the LTTE's role and aims in Sri Lankan politics. There seems to be little doubt now that Tamil opinion is not overly concerned with the fate of the LTTE in Sri Lanka.

As the situation obtains at present, there seems to be little prospect of any forward movement either in the restoration of the provincial governments in the northern and eastern provinces even as it existed during the brief period the EPRLF was in power. This will continue to be so as long as the LTTE is not chastened to recognise the right of the Tamil parties to contest its supremacy through democratic means. Nor can it be expected that the Muslim opinion, hardly enthusiastic about the merger of the North and East at the best of times, can be brought around to it now after the continued outrages against innocent Muslims by the LTTE.

Notwithstanding this rather pessimistic outlook for the realisation of one of the key elements of the Indo-Sri Lankan accord, it seems highly unlikely that President Premadasa will go back on the commitment on the Tamil demand for self-rule in the northern and eastern provinces specified in the Jayewardene-Rajiv Gandhi agreements.

This is by no means a pious hope. The traumatic experience which the island has gone through over more than a decade now seems to have had its impact in convincing Sri Lankan opinion that only a rational basis of power sharing between the Sinhalese and Tamils can ensure the territorial integrity of the island. Thus, there is not likely to be the kind of Sinhalese backlash as it had erupted in 1956 forcing S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike to renege on the pact he had signed with the Tamil leader S.J. Selvanayagam.

There is, moreover, a modicum of understanding which seems to have emerged between influential sections of Tamil political opinion in Sri Lanka, in spite of its being smothered by the LTTE and the Sinhalese leadership which has conceded Tamil demands adequate enough to enable it to participate in the country's political system. This again is a hopeful sign that a negotiated settlement of the ethnic question is certainly within the realm of possibility. On this score, therefore, the stipulation in the 1987 accord can be said to have been fulfilled.

Earlier, Colombo's search for a military solution of the conflict eventually led to its quest for military or quasi-military support from third countries which were not necessarily disposed to be disinterested in India. Its overtures to some of these powers involved a quid pro quo, a development in India's soft under belly which was a source of security concern to India. Indian misgivings in this respect have been got out of the way in the years since the accord was concluded. Moreover, the changes in the global security environment do not warrant over-reaction by India over some of Sri Lanka's diplomatic moves.

All said, therefore, the key provisions of the accord have lost much of their relevance to warrant its renewal.

Insistence on its renewal can only rekindle a highly emotive atmosphere in Sri Lanka and cannot be said to pave the way for harmonious Indo-Sri Lankan relations. A dialogue is, therefore, called for a better understanding of each other's sensitivities on the part of the two countries.

Iran Holds Indian Doctor Without Charges

93AS0155A Madras THE HINDU in English
16 Oct 92 p 9

[Article by F.J. Khergamvala]

[Text] Manama (Bahrain), Oct. 15—In one more episode of a rocky Indo-Iran relationship, security officials in Iran have held an Indian doctor for over a month but continue to deny consular access to the Indian embassy.

Dr. Vijay Kumar, an expatriate was taken into custody in mid-September in Garmsar, a town of roughly 10,000 people about 105 km southeast of Teheran. No formal charges have yet been filed against the surgeon, who has been in Iran for seven years.

The doctor's wife, who is a teacher at an Indian school in Teheran was allowed to see him a day after he was held and then again on October 12. At the last meeting, Dr. Kumar's car and his personal effects were returned to his wife by the Semnan provincial security authorities. It is fortunate that the doctor's wife lives in Teheran and sources say this is one reason why Indian officials learnt of the incident immediately.

Repeated entreaties to Iran through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and through the embassy in New Delhi have failed to evoke an official response as to why he was seized, whether he has been charged, and how long he is likely to be in custody. The Iranian Foreign Office has given the stock reply that the matter is being looked into, suggesting that its writ runs weak with provincial or security personnel. However, official requests to solicit more information have drawn an Iranian hint that Dr. Kumar's arrest had nothing to do with the duties he was performing nor for violation of any of the codes of moral behaviour for which other foreigners, notably two Indian doctors, had been punished. The insinuation is that he was involved in some kind of spying or information gathering activity.

At least one report has it that a camera was found in his car. Moreover, papers, including correspondence with the Royal College of Surgeons [RCS] were also found in his possession. Dr Kumar is believed to have cleared part one of the requirements for a fellowship of the RCS and was preparing for part two, which doctors say has to be undertaken in Britain, unlike part one which is a written test which can be submitted. In other words, Iranian officials could easily verify the intentions behind Dr. Kumar's correspondence.

The return of the personal effects of the doctor in custody has created some alarm among Indians in Teheran. But it could also be that enquiries may be reaching an end. Either way, it is inexplicable why Iran continues to deny access to Indian diplomats. India does not have an unblemished record in granting full facilities to foreigners seized in the country but in this case sources say there is no linkage with any Iranian held in India. In part it is the often demonstrated weakness of Indian officials in New Delhi on consular issues with Iran that emboldens the Iranian Foreign Office to drag its feet.

Internal Affairs

Commentary Notes Return of Peace in Punjab

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[Journalist Sanjiv Gaur commentary: "Peace Returns to the Troubled State of Punjab"]

[Text] The song and drama is back in Punjab, so are the Bhangra and Geetha [Punjabi dance and song]. The youth festivals are back along with the cultural activities, including the theater, the sports, including cricket and hockey, and the rural games like Kabaddi and Khokho, are also back. What else the people of Punjab want? Nothing else, really. The peace has returned to Punjab. The cautious observers of the Punjab scene might call it partial peace in view of the fact that sporadic violence is still continuing in the state and it is spearheaded by the so-called Khalistani separatists. But it will be [word indistinct] to note here that despite the separatist movement which is yet to die completely, the killing by militants for the past many months is now less. On the other hand, the security forces, including the brave Indian army, the Border Security Force, the Central Reserve Police Force [CRPF], and the Punjab police, have succeeded in killing or catching most of the top militant leaders or killers. Sukhdev Singh, chief of the Babbar Khalsa group, is dead and so are many other top militant leaders like him, including Gurcharan Singh Bhutsiwala and Nishan Singh Makhu.

According to reports, the fresh recruitment of the militants is not taking place mainly because of the pressure of the security forces who must be given the main credit for the return of peace in Punjab which has been witnessing bloodshed for more than a decade now. The security forces, particularly the army, have played a real good role in encircling the militants in Punjab countryside and arresting them with the help of the Punjab police and the CRPF, the two other forces, which are engaged in the battle against this invisible army in the state. Mr. K.P.S. Gill, the director general of the Punjab police, is winning laurels from every quarter, including the army generals who do not move an inch in planning any antimilitant operation without consulting him. Mr. Gill is hailed as field marshal of Punjab by his admirers these days. He has indeed provided a dynamic leadership to the security forces, besides boosting their morale in this fight against the separatist forces who are still enjoying full support and backing of Pakistan, that is India's neighbor.

Credit for the return of peace in Punjab should also go to the popular government of Mr. Beant Singh. The much-needed political activity has returned to Punjab only after the installation of the Beant Singh government. The chief minister has been bravely taking on the militants through his public utterances in which he never hesitated to condemn them in the strongest words. A number of his ministerial colleagues roam around in different parts, talking to people not only against militancy but also about development of the state which had almost been at a standstill because of the tragedy and turmoil in the state.

The process of development has started again. The state, already a leader in the country in agriculture and the birthplace of Green Revolution, is reaching new heights in the production of wheat and rice. Besides, the state has already taken the lead in diversification with the introduction of new crops like sunflower and tomato. Similarly, once again in the field of industry, Punjab is back on the rails. At least the flight of industry has stopped and new, small, medium, and even large industrial units are again coming up in different parts of the state.

One very positive development is the return of total peace and tranquillity in the Golden Temple. Today, the Hindus of Amritsar have again started visiting the Golden Temple like in the past and it is a delight to see the Hindus and Sikhs working hand in hand in the Golden Temple—the holy place they visit to worship. But, perhaps, the most positive development is the return of folk and traditional Punjabi songs and drama in not only the towns and cities of Punjab but the countryside as well. Today, the song and drama troupes can be seen performing in different open-air theaters and auditoriums of Punjab. The flow of tourists, both Indian and foreign, has also started once again.

Government Urged To Involve Akalis in Healing of Punjab

93AS0175A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi
21, 22 Oct 92

[Article in two installments by Amrik: "The Solution Is Not Simply in Cleansing"]

[21 Oct p 4]

[Text] Punjab, which is always surrounded by a bizarre maze of hopes and condemned to face misfortunes, is seeing the elusive dream of being reclaimed once again. They are doing a "paper analysis" of Punjab without even going there and are presenting the face of a "changed Punjab" to the whole nation. The overzealous chief minister of Punjab, Beant Singh, is repeating the mantra of "everything is peaceful now" everywhere and all the time. A major portion of politicians and the media from Chandigarh to Delhi have agreed that killing of a large number of Khalistani terrorists means that the reign of terror in Punjab has been broken. It is true that many notorious leaders of the terrorists who were leading fascist Khalistani campaigns in their respective regions have been killed in confrontation with the police. However, their lesser clones are still alive and innumerable. Still, we have to ask: "Is it possible to eliminate the widespread terrorism that had controlled every sphere of life?"

One of the misconceptions about Punjab is that terrorism was considered the main problem here, and as the result of it the whole problem was considered to be the disruption of law and order. The people who controlled the governments in Delhi and Punjab pushed aside the persons who had tried repeatedly to tell them that the logical reasons for this problem were political, psychological, economical,

and cultural. Debate between the two groups continued over it. Terrorism is a part of the problem in Punjab, not the problem itself.

Ironically, the groups that thought that Punjab's problem was not that of law and order have suffered most. It is also true that they suffered loss of life when law and order was disrupted. For example, many left-wing people were assassinated whenever a vocal and logical opposition to Khalistani terrorism was carried out. Even today it is the left-wing people who have the most danger of physical harm in Punjab. Satpal Dang and Mangat Ram Pasala and leaders like them top the hit list of the terrorists. Even today they say in Punjab that all the sins of the leftists are on one side and their accomplishments on the other. Anyhow, from the beginning the leftists have been repeating that the Punjab problem is basically a political issue and should be resolved by political means. Even the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the soft-core Akalis agree with it now. However, all this talk is meaningless for Beant Singh. It is because he believed from the beginning that the only solution to this problem was bullets fired by the police.

It would not be wrong to say that Beant Singh became the chief minister because of the ousted Khalistanis and Akalis. And Beant Singh himself knows it. It was a foregone conclusion that the Khalistanis and the Akalis were at the top of Beant Singh's hit list. When Beant Singh became the chief minister of Punjab by representing only 10 percent of voters there, the administrative mechanism in Punjab had become very ineffective. The parallel government established by the Khalistanis gave orders even to the cabinet. Terrorism was rampant. This situation changed when Beant Singh took over the government. After a long time, Punjab got a chief minister who had the combined qualities of Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon and Giani Zail Singh.

After the killing of thousands of innocent people and failure of operation Blue Star, the people who were courageously struggling to establish peace and good will in Punjab strongly began to believe that the real solution of the Khalistani poisonous atmosphere lay in democratic means. One reason for this belief was that the factionalist Khalistani campaign was against the democratic system. Democracy was an important part of the goal for which a major portion of leftists, BJP, Akalis, and Congress Party members were willing to sacrifice their lives. It is important to mention here that they were fighting the anti-democratic fascist elements in Punjab that had disrupted democracy in Punjab for their vested interests. They strengthened the hands of Khalistanis in Punjab. It is not coincidental that the people who once opposed Indira Gandhi, Zail Singh, Darbara Singh, Buta Singh, and Rajiv Gandhi are now opposing the all-powerful Beant Singh. The fact that they are being ignored is an entirely another matter.

Incidentally, aren't all those people who sacrificed their lives to save Punjab being ignored after the Congress government was established? There are many people who fought this war who are still alive and the dark shadow of death is still chasing them. Those who claim to run Punjab

now do not even remember them. (It is important to mention here that Beant Singh himself did not face any danger before he was elected chief minister.) It is important to ask why every time talks about Punjab start in Chandigarh and Delhi, no one remembers the Akali camp pitched against the left-wing parties, Bharatiya Janata Dal, and the terrorists? Does Punjab belong to the Congress and Beant Singh only?

The non-Congress Party elements had welcomed Beant Singh's appointment as chief minister. They had thought:

(a) Even though only 10 percent of Congress votes have supported this government, the tired democracy got a reprieve. This is believed by a powerful camp of the left-wing parties and the BJP. They believed that the victory of the Congress Party was analogous to the defeat of Khalistanis.

(b) The belief was that the newly elected Congress government in Punjab would be influenced by the liberal and basically democratic places of the Congress president and Narasimha Rao. Beant Singh's government was expected to be honestly and seriously democratic.

(c) It was commonly believed that the minority votes would have some positive results. For example, Beant Singh was expected to be more responsible. It was also believed that Beant Singh tried to win the support of the people who had not supported him during the elections.

From the point of administration and politics, the lack of cooperation made a very strict governor and police chief ineffective in Punjab. Several minor and major "operations" proved to be useless after initial successes. The reason for their failure was that the problem was attributed to law and order and those operations were closed in the very beginning. Thus, administrative decisions affected the latter political decisions negatively. Beant Singh is repeating the history now. However, it is clearly evident he has not learned the lesson from history. The crisis-ridden Punjab is being governed by yet another leader whose administrative policy is sharper than a sword and is wearing very dark glasses on his political eyes. This is a new phase of crisis in Punjab.

The law-and-order situation is definitely improving in Punjab. The bands of hired killers, smugglers, and looters who were masquerading as Khadkus (terrorists) are totally under control now. The Khalistani terrorists are under strict control. This is an unprecedented situation. During the last 12 years of rampant terrorism, there have been many such phases in which there had been defeat-victory situations between the government and Khalistani terrorists; however, there was never a definite victory or defeat. The fact is that irresponsible politics of confrontation always have such results. A revitalized segment of Punjabis, which is reviewing all kinds of developments in the state, is getting worried all over again. If policies and beliefs are not changed, then the present phase would also pass.

Let us visit villages in Punjab. Every other villager in Punjab says we need peace. However they also say that we

must talk with the Akalis and the Khadkus in order to resolve the whole issue. The people know from their long experience that if terrorism is suppressed once, it raises its ugly head again with more force and ruthlessness. The people also know that the chief minister's hyperbole and extra caution of the police will not dry up the source of the river from where new recruits come to the terrorists. Therefore, in order to dry up the source, we must follow honest political paths. The most important prerequisite for this is that we must accept the Punjab issue as basically a political problem, and we must give up the misleading lie that the terrorism is the main problem in Punjab. That would be the real beginning of the efforts to end the vicious circle of problems in Punjab.

It appears that Prime Minister Narasimha Rao is totally apathetic about Punjab now. It was clear from the beginning that Punjab was never a priority issue for him. Mr. Rao, who practices opportunistic politics, used this policy over Punjab also. Incidentally, did he not do the same for Kashmir? Rao's administrative style and his image first gave the impression that he would take concrete action to undo Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi's work by taking liberal but strong action. Whether he took this path in resolving other issues is debatable. It definitely did not happen in Punjab. We are still criticizing the politics and political opportunism practiced by Vishwanath Pratap Singh and Chandra Shekhar, and this will continue for some time. However they are still more popular than Rao, at least in Punjab.

Narasimha Rao started his work in Punjab exactly where Rajiv Gandhi left it. When Narasimha Rao became prime minister, he had to first discuss Punjab. He suggested that the issue be resolved according to the Rajiv-Langowal agreement. It is clear that Mr. Rao was not knowledgeable about the situation in Punjab at that time. There was a long debate about the timeliness on the anachronism of this agreement, and those who believed that this agreement was inappropriate at that time won the debate. They said that the situation had exacerbated since 1985. It is important to mention here that Narasimha Rao's decision to resolve the Punjab issue according to the agreement between Harchand Singh Langowal and Rajiv Gandhi shows that the prime minister recognized the issue as political and he wanted to take a political action to resolve it. For a long time his action on Punjab was limited to this statement. No efforts were made to make these agreements timely and more effective. There is no doubt that this led to the failure. Later, all this talk about this agreement was put into cold storage and the balloons about a package deal were released into the air. The prime minister himself burst that balloon in a press conference later. Beant Singh continued to repeat every other day that Mr. Rao was bringing the package to Punjab and this package would contain this and that. What effects would this proposed package have had on Punjab? It is hard to say. However, Narasimha Rao's announcement that he had no such package under consideration makes the government and the Congress Party trustworthy [sic].

After this controversial election resulting in Beant Singh becoming the chief minister, he thought that he has

nothing to do with the Punjab problem. The prime minister believed whatever the chief minister told him on his visits to Delhi and sent him back with his blessings. One direct effect of the chief minister's reports was that Mr. Rao began to announce that the main problem in Punjab was one of law and order. The prime minister did not visit Punjab although he had several opportunities to do so. Even the series of merciless murders did not convince Narasimha Rao that he should visit Punjab.

[22 Oct 92 p 4]

[Text] It is a known fact that Beant Singh, the "commander in chief of Punjab" appointed by Narasimha Rao, hates Akalis. He considers all Akalis more dangerous than the armed terrorists. His strong, or dense, opinion is that the whole Punjab problem was created by Akali politics. Beant Singh continues to express his worry in his daily statements that while the terrorists would be taken care of by the police, there is no remediation to get rid of the Akalis. Obviously, he will want to use police tactics against them also. The chief minister believes that use of batons and jails will make the Akalis forget their politics. Thus, the Akalis are facing a semi-emergency-like situation in Punjab. They do not have the permission of take-out rallies. No doubt this is the Congress Party approach to deal with the opposition, however, its autocratic and suicidal use in problem-ridden Punjab will not only hurt the government in Punjab but also the whole nation. Incidentally, the Congress Party's presenting itself as the sole crusader against the terrorists and declaring itself the only protector of national unity is also very dangerous and harmful.

The changing situation in the present era would have provided changed roles for the Akali. Their influential camps could have openly worked against the terrorists, and this still could happen. There will be a fight over the succession of Sikh politics. When the Khalistani Akalis lost to the Khalistani terrorists, the Akalis became their hostages. Punjab and the whole country is well aware of the results of this clash. This was our greatest political and philosophical defeat related to Punjab: Khalistani politics emerged as the new incarnation of Akalis politics. This happened because of the crimes of our government in Punjab, which it still is committing. The Khalistani terrorists had their greatest triumph when they took control of traditional Akalis. At that time, they had said that it was just the defeat of Akalis. This was only a half truth as this was the defeat of Indian Government also. However, the government has neither then nor now admitted its blunder. The proponents of the mainstream politics made the Akalis even more untouchable instead of protecting them. The whole energy was focused to make Akalis pariahs, and this effort is still going on.

The Akalis have always been considered the mainstream political leaders in Punjab and the Sikh community. True, that Akalis do not represent the whole Sikh community. However, the section of the population they represent has been very effective and successful in changing the direction of politics in Punjab. This role is at standstill now. They also have the complaint that their psychosis has been

silenced. No one is representing their hurt viewpoint in its entirety. Even though they peace and goodwill cannot be returned to Punjab without their involvement.

Anyhow, it is true that the sins of the Akalis are unforgivable. Still, the decade's history of Sikh politics indicates that the path taken by the Akalis was different than the one taken by the Khalistani terrorists. The fact is that the Khalistani terrorists always considered the traditional Akalis the greatest hurdles in their path. The world knows that Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale had the support of Congress Party, however, Sikh terrorism was born because of the failure of Akalis' fight against the Congress Party. From its very inception, this vocal terrorist faction represented hatred of a communal minority of Sikhs. This is also proved when they revolted against their Congress Party bosses and killed the members of one group mercilessly at the orders of a blue-clothed "sant." The Bhindrewala edition of Sikh politics emerged fully only after the Akalis were totally out of the picture. They still were fighting the terrorists quietly under the leadership of Sant Harchand Singh Langowal to keep control of Sikh politics. Some aspects of their confrontation were contradictory. One reason for that was the youth who had access to the weapons had "bathed in the river of disappointments," which the Akalis had caused. This river was a flood after the failure of Akali politics of peace.

Sant Bhindrewale did not see any difference between the Akalis and the Congress Party. There was no distinction between Congress people and the Akalis on his hit list even though he was born out of the disagreement between the Congress Party and the Akalis. The brokers of Khalistani terrorism and Sikh fundamentalism are indebted to the Congress rulers who suppressed the Akali campaign and offered resources to help Bhindrewala shine. The pillaged and ransacked Punjab will never be able to forgive the then-rulers of Delhi empire for these deliberately committed sins.

After Operation Blue Star, the Akalis became important again, even though the ill effects of Blue Star were still felt on Punjabi politics. Even the Akalis, who considered Khalistani terrorists their rivals, were opposed to Blue Star as were the majority of the Sikhs who wanted peace and accord. Operation Blue Star gave new life to the Akalis. An agreement (which was full of inconsistencies) between Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Harchand Singh Langowal was reached, and in spite of the rebirth of a new terrorist bloc because of Blue Star, Akalis won the majority in the elections, and Surjit Singh Barnala of Langowal group became the chief minister. Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Prakash Singh Badal did not accept Barnala because both of them wanted to control the government themselves. Sant Langowal had kept both of them out of the Punjab agreement, and this did not bring about any positive results. Later, the belief that the agreement was not for Punjab but for a person or group became widely accepted (mostly because the Central government could not implement this agreement after Sant Langowal was assassinated). The prevalence of this belief made the Barnala government gradually ineffective. The Akalis still

continued to fight the Khalistani terrorists. Barnala sent police to the Golden Temple despite bitter opposition by his opponents in the Akali Dal. Later, he apologized to the entire religious group for this action. He still continued to fight the terrorists.

The mold of Sikh terrorism changed after 1989. Many new panthak (religious) committees and groups became active. The Khalistanis agreed that terrorists should come from behind the curtain and establish their independent political identity, increase their influence among the (Sikh) people, and unite to establish their own government. The terrorists who wanted to establish a separate political identity and increase their influence on the people believed that it was imperative to fully control Akali politics. Thus, they started this campaign on the dint of weapons, and the apathy of the Centre helped them. Finally, the terrorists won. The Akalis would have been in different shape and following different direction had Mr. Sheshan not committed the sin of postponing elections at that time. At that time, the Akalis were still active despite strong opposition by the terrorists. The Akalis were being shot at, thrown bombs at, and were receiving threats of blowing up their children and told to stay away from participating in the elections. However, the goal that the Khalistani murderers could not achieve with bullets was achieved by T.N. Sheshan's pen.

The truth, which was not known to the leaders in Delhi and Mr. Sheshan, was well-known to the Khalistanis. Had the Akalis taken over the government in Chandigarh by winning the elections (even with cooperation from other parties), the toxication of power would have freed them of all the chains that bound them. They would have been resurrected and became just like Surjit Singh Barnala. In other words, they would have confronted the Khalistani terrorists head-on. This fear would have been proved accurate and could be proved in the future. Anyhow, the terrorists kept getting stronger as the Akalis lost ground. The disgusted and disillusioned Akalis became hostages of the terrorists. Only two sources of power were left in Punjab—Sikh terrorists and the government. Even Akali leaders admit that in such a situation they had to join one or the other force. It was natural for them to yield to the terrorists demanding a separate Sikh state. Their whole spirit was broken and they were forced to agree to boycott elections.

Let us review the latest statements issued by Prakash Singh Badal, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Simaranjit Singh Saun, and Jagdev Singh Talwandi. A collage of their statement clearly indicates that boycotting the elections was a mistake and that the Congress Party was in power because the Akalis had boycotted the elections. It is true that the Akalis are careful and are not announcing all this openly, however, their despondency over not participating in the elections is apparent. Even though the Akalis have very limited influence in urban areas, they took great interest in recent municipal elections. They also fielded some of their members as nonparty candidates.

It has repeatedly happened. Whenever pressure on the terrorists was increased, the Akalis became stronger. The

Khalistani terrorists are not watching Akalis' activities now. The hold of the terrorists breaking gradually. The Akalis themselves are feeling that their strength is returning and their resurrection is becoming possible. This whole picture will be clear after the panchayat [village council] elections are held in a few months. The rural Punjab is indeed the Akalis' own home field. The Congress Party and Beant Singh will also be tested during these panchayat elections. Is it possible that Beant Singh is opposed to Akalis because of this fear? Concern is also being expressed that the Akalis might boycott panchayat elections because of Beant Singh's dictatorial attitude.

Anyhow, we must admit the fact that even though Punjab may not belong wholly to the Akalis, some of it does belong to them. Perhaps, Beant Singh has forgotten this fact. The support of Akalis is mandatory for winning the final and decisive battle against the Khalistani terrorists. Without their support, each battle would be just a stopgap and will have no tangible results. The Punjab problem will be solved only by political means because there is no other alternative. Akalis will play the most important role in the political solution. For it, we must start action to bring them back into the mainstream. The Centre must find a cure for their feelings of being unjustly treated.

Imminent Cabinet Reshuffle Outlined, Discussed
93AS0178A Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
25 Oct 92 pp 1, 12

[Article by Neerja Chowdhury]

[Text] New Delhi—The Prime Minister has initiated a detailed exercise on the long awaited Cabinet reshuffle which according to him is now very much on the cards.

Though Mr Narasimha Rao has not disclosed the "time frame" in which it will take place—it is a risky business speculating on timing with the present Prime Minister—political observers expect the event to take place in the next ten days. The winter session of Parliament is scheduled to start on Nov 23 and the new Ministers need a couple of weeks to get oriented to their new departments before being ready to face the onslaught of the opposition.

The reshuffle was expected last week and the Defence Minister Mr Sharad Pawar who was abroad was asked to rush back. But then the plans changed again.

According to sources in the party, several ministers are on the Prime Minister's hit list. But it remains to be seen whether Mr Narasimha Rao will actually manage to remove them or merely move them around to another department.

Though Mr B. Shankaranand and Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad have come under the scam cloud and Railway Minister C.K. Jaffer Sharief has invited strictures from the High Court, party leaders feel that it is not going to be easy for the Prime Minister to axe them. The first is a Scheduled Caste leader and the other two belong to the minority community. It might have been possible for Mr Rao to get rid of one of the two Muslim ministers if there were other good Muslim names to replace them. Former Maharashtra

Chief Minister A.R. Antulay has been tipped for induction in the cabinet for sometime now but he has first to be cleared by the Court and the case is still in progress in Bombay.

Similarly political observers expect reshuffle of the junior ministers looking after the economic ministries. Rameshwar Thakur and Dalbir Singh, the two lieutenants of Manmohan Singh, who were embroiled in a controversy with the JPC [Joint Parliamentary Committee], and P.K. Thongon, who is Minister of State for Industry seem to be in trouble. If they are not removed, their portfolios may be changed.

If this happens, it will be an implied censure of Manmohan Singh though he is not likely to be touched, notwithstanding Pranab Mukherjee's ongoing efforts to replace him.

Besides the Finance Minister, the three other heavyweights in government—Home Minister S.B. Chavan, Defence Minister Sharad Pawar and Human Resources Development [HRD] Minister Arjun Singh are not expected to be moved.

Change of portfolio: However, there is a view in the party, and this has come to the fore in the course of consultations the Prime Minister has had with some of his colleagues and well wishers, that it might be good to move Arjun Singh from HRD to Commerce. Though the HRD ministry is not weighty in the political sense, it is given to public dealing. For that reason, it allows enormous space for image building to a skilled practitioner of realpolitik like the HRD Minister and Arjun Singh has not missed any opportunities.

While transferring Arjun Singh to Commerce might enable the Prime Minister to get the controversial Dunkel draft signed by him, making any future criticism impossible, elevating the wily leader to an economic ministry has its own problems. So it is a Hobson's choice for the prime minister.

Mr Arjun Singh, Mr V.C. Shukla and Mr Madhav Rao Scindia are among those who are reportedly hoping to head the External Affairs Ministry. However, this is a ministry Mr Narasimha Rao may keep with him. He may also decide to retain Industry. The Prime Minister may not risk giving this department to anyone else, given the delicate stage of the progress of the new economic package.

Mr Shukla, who is currently looking after the Water resources Ministry, is also a contender for the Commerce Ministry which was vacated by Mr P. Chidambaram after the securities scam erupted.

Who will get Law is anyone's guess. The Ministry was till a few weeks ago headed by Mr Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, now Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Former Law Minister Mr Shiv Shankar has met Mr Rao several times recently but given the rivalry between the two leaders, this seems a far cry.

Besides, External Affairs, Law, Commerce, and Industry, the other ministry which is headless is Labour and Mr P.A. Sangma is expected to be upgraded to hold its charge.

The Labour portfolio was held by Mr V.K. Ramamurthy who resigned on the Cauvery issue. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Ms Jayalalitha is understood to be trying for his reinduction but the Prime Minister may consider this only when he can balance this move by rehabilitating his arch rival G.K. Moopanar in the party here. That cannot happen till the organisational elections, currently on in Tamil Nadu, are completed.

The Prime Minister is understood to be considering reviving the post of a Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office as in Rajiv Gandhi's time when Mrs Shiela Dixit held this charge. Mrs Margaret Alva, Minister of State for Personnel, is being tipped for this post.

Those who are in trouble include Urban Development Minister Mrs Shiela Kaul and Health Minister M.L. Fotedar. As far as Mrs Kaul is concerned, the Prime Minister would take such a step only after he has had a word with Mrs Sonia Gandhi for Shiela Kaul is relative of the Nehru clan. Mr Fotedar's removal may placate R.K. Dhawan and Satish Sharma, both of whom are trying for a place in the council of ministers, but without rewarding them. The removal of both ministers are not expected to create any ripples.

Mr Ashok Gehlot, Mr K.C. Lenka, Ministers of State for Textiles and Agriculture, are among those who are on the mat. Those slated for inclusion in government are Mr Arvind Netam and Mr Manoranjan Bhakta, both tribal leaders, and Mr K.P. Singh Deo from Orissa.

EXPRESS Surveys Rao's Decisionmaking Style

93AS0178D Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
25 Oct 92 p 11

[Article by Bino K. John]

[Text] The *INDIAN EXPRESS* national debate titled "The Prime Minister is indecisive" brought in an overwhelming response of 767 entries of which a majority of 518 people agreed with the motion and 249 wrote-in saying that P.V. Narasimha Rao is in fact quite decisive and that he delays decisions to suit his purpose. The advertisement inviting 250-word essays on this subject was published in the edit and op-ed pages of all *INDIAN EXPRESS* editions and the response could mostly be from people who are regular readers of analytical articles which appear in these pages. The *EXPRESS* debate thus feels the pulse of the cream of English-reading public cutting through all social and age barriers and serves as a significant indicator of the mood of the country. Those who sent in entries range from the 90-year-old journalist from Pune, Capt R.L. Rau (Retd) to the 10-year-old girl, Deepti Radhakrishnan from Bombay.

The maximum number of entries were from Maharashtra (127) followed by Tamil Nadu (117), Karnataka (107), Kerala (91), and Andhra Pradesh (80). The response to the

debate indicates that now that the Narasimha Rao government has completed one and a half years in power the country is pondering about the quiet and unruffled manner in which the Prime Minister is going about the business of running the country. Though many readers from different parts of the country felt amazed by his ability to "procrastinate" and "vacillate" which many angrily suggested should be what his initials stand for, there were few demands for the removal of the prime minister nor was the name of an alternative prime minister in the Congress suggested. This means that though a majority is dissatisfied with his style of functioning country is satisfied and feels that the country is safe in Narasimha Rao's hands. Another indication of this is that a majority of the essays started out describing how Rao had stepped into an impossible situation and led the country through flames of anarchy though the embers of discontent still glow. "His decisions are always not to take decisions," wrote MRK Menon, 78, retired chief engineer from Poonithira, Kerala.

A profile of the Prime Minister that emerges is that of a quirky blend of Hamlet and Chanakya who creates the impression that he knows what is best for the country and there is no need to take hasty decisions and repent at leisure. "Democracy does not suggest cutting the Gordian knot in a single stroke," wrote Alexander P.J., a 20-year-old student from Trivandrum. Harmandeep Singh, a 21-year-old student from Faridkot in Punjab counters this with the suggestions that the prime minister seems to be following the dictum that "when it is hard to act it is better to feign ignorance of the need to act" and makes a desperate plea that seems to sum up the feeling of the country, "The nation beckons him to act, to respond." The Hamlet-Chanakya syndrome in which the prime minister is seemingly trapped is what the country is anxious about. As Prof B.M. Baliga, 47-year-old advocate from Bangalore wrote "While the Rao government vegetates and cogitates the common man agitates."

Well, the people are not exactly up in revolt against the Prime Ministers as say during the dark days of the Emergency or when the Bofors issue first ricocheted across the nation. The issues that agitated almost all the readers who supported the motion was that the Prime Minister did not seem to have any gameplan to tackle the Ayodhya, Punjab and Jammu Kashmir issue and felt that those responsible for the stock scam would be allowed to get away. The fact that even in his home state of Andhra Pradesh the issue of changing the chief minister was kept hanging agitated many who wrote from his state including one who sarcastically commented that it was ironical that a man who knows so many languages cannot understand the language of his own state. Others however felt that the Prime Minister's way of looking at dissident activity in Congress-ruled states was not the way Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi tackled it. His reluctance to force his will on the states was seen as a positive sign.

Amid all this anxiety about his style of functioning what is increasingly becoming evident is that Rao has no inclination of following the parameters of functioning drawn up by his predecessors. Just as on the economic front the

Prime Minister is leading a liberalising procedure which has no parallel in the country, he has decided to set his own rules when it comes to decision-making. And since he has indeed taken major decisions including going ahead with the Mandal commission recommendations which surprisingly no reader has touched upon in detail, those who back him have enough examples to buttress their argument.

The readers who still repose confidence in the ability of the Prime Minister go by the major decisions that he took during the last one-and-a-half years. The acceptance of the resignation of what a writer called "a dynamic commerce minister" P Chidambaram and that of Madhavsingh Solanki, the élan with which the tension generated by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president M.M. Joshi's Ekta Yatra was defused and the fact that relations with neighbouring countries have not deteriorated were the main issues. During the Ekta Yatra he remained cool and added a feather to his cap according to Louis Figaredo writing from Kalpetta in Kerala.

The fact that the country depends so much on loans from the IMF has worried many readers. Kancha Haiah from Hyderabad feels that the IMF would be wondering why a person who in the beginning was very decisive when it came to accepting their conditions "slowly slipped into indecisiveness" later on.

"The daily death dance" as M.T. Raghavan from Bangalore morbidly described the situation in Punjab and Kashmir does no longer dominate the list of national worries. It could be the feeling that the state can hold on much longer than the militants can and also because nobody really seemed to have any concrete suggestion to go about these two perennial problems which could dislodge any Prime Minister.

The fact that the Prime Minister sought a moratorium on problematic issues facing the country gave to some readers a clear indication about his style of functioning. "If that is the way to salvation there is no need for the all powerful PMO [expansion not given] and the paraphernalia it encompasses," says Sajeev K.M. from New Delhi's Janakpuri. Keeping issues in cold storage or hoping against hope that the fires will die out on its own seemed characteristic of the way the Prime Minister has been working.

According to 68-year-old retired principal R.S. Malpani from Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, as a nation we have been passive for the last thousand years and even Independence and Partition was forced upon us. "So indecision or inaction is our style, our ethos. The Prime Minister is not a messiah." But unfortunately, a messiah is what the country needs now.

Arjun Singh's Manipulative Politics Viewed

93AS0178C Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
25 Oct 92 p 10

[Article by Jal Khambata; italicized words, quotation marks as published]

[Text] The past record of a man is the best measure to judge his future course of action. For the Human Resource

Development Minister Arjun Singh, the past begins with the moves his political 'guru', late Dwarka Prasad Mishra of Madhya Pradesh taught him to play on the chess board of politics. He always calculates many moves ahead. Anyone interpreting his politics just from a particular move will go wrong as the move may be only a strategy to checkmate or fool the rival.

Besides chess, he learnt from Mishra how to use information as the most important tool in politics. He loves information, craves for information—gossip and rumours included. Improving upon Mishra's folly to depend on the intelligence agencies' information that cost him the chief ministership in the sixties, Arjun Singh added journalists as an additional source of information.

He perfected the art of information exchange with journalists. In Bhopal, he cultivated upright journalists by leaking them big scoops. He would even pass on the government files to them to earn their confidence, to earn their friendship. To others, he gave government bungalows and plots at a throw-away price. He financed small-time journalists to publish their own weeklies, and used them to tarnish the image of his rivals. He even funded their boozing sprees by doling out money from the chief minister's fund for 'medical treatment'. He also excelled in giving the largesse of government advertisements to obliging newspapers. Many journalists in Delhi remember him for telephone connections he liberally distributed during his earlier short tenure as the communication minister.

The chess master is always too eager to have information from journalists about his rivals, no matter even if it were a gossip. He knows that the gossip does more harm than true information. He even encourages journalists to paddle gossip as news just to embarrass his rivals.

Arjun Singh excels in exposing instead of opposing a rival. He is true to himself when he repeatedly pledges his loyalty to Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. He will not oppose him; he will prefer to expose him. He used this tactic to finish many political rivals in Madhya Pradesh. Former speaker Yagyadutt Sharma, former Deputy Speaker Ram Kishore Shukla and present Deputy Speaker Srinivas Tiwari are among victims of his politics of exposure.

He is, however, clever, never doing the dirty job of exposure himself. Friends in the Press cultivated by him come handy, more so when they have the exclusive story, full with all documents meticulously researched and gathered by the state intelligence apparatus. During one such 'operation expose' of Yagyadutt Sharma for land grab in Indore, Arjun Singh passed on the documents to the editor of a Hindi weekly, DINAMAN. He waited and waited but the story did not appear. He fielded the same story to Udayan Sharma, the editor of another Hindi weekly, RAVIVAR. Interestingly, both the weeklies hit the stand at the same time with the story on Yagyadutt Sharma's land scandal, full with identical pictures and identical documents.

Arjun Singh has a reputation to stand by friends in times of adversity. Take the case of Udayan Sharma. He is now

chairman of the Nehru Yuvak Kendra, with the status of the union minister of state. Or, take the case of Ajit Jogi, an engineer-turned-IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officer trapped for corruption during his posing as the district collector of Indore. Arjun Singh moved swiftly to relieve him from the government job and got him the Rajya Sabha seat.

Bureaucrats know his quality of going out of his way to help loyalists. It is this confidence in him that helps him have a sway over the IAS and the IPS [Indian Police Service] officers. He has been helping and accommodating many such loyalists. Sudip Bannerji, an IAS officer who took pains all along to get him friends in the Press in Delhi, Bhopal, Calcutta and Bombay, is now the finance controller in the human resource development ministry. Ashok Bajpei, an IAS officer of Bharat Bhawan fame, moved in three months ago as director of culture in the same ministry. Arjun Singh has relied on him in matters of culture for many years, and has now assigned him the task of developing a national cultural policy. Two other loyalist IAS officers from Madhya Pradesh are now in Delhi as his private secretaries.

He knows how to use these bureaucrats. Again, the purpose is that of gathering information. The IAS officers have a close sense of camaraderie so that a Sudip Bannerji can ring up a colleague in the home ministry and get any information faster for Arjun Singh than even Home Minister S.B. Chavan. Arjun Singh may not be the home minister but this does not deter him from using his loyalists in the intelligence agencies to procure dossiers on his political rivals. He already has his men in position in all key places in the Centre, including the Prime Minister's Office.

Sudip Bannerji and Ashok Bajpei are the kingpins of his image-building team, earlier in Bhopal and now in Delhi. They are busy cultivating journalists in key positions in Delhi newspapers as Arjun Singh will need them sooner or later to fix up his political rivals. He took M.J. Akbar, who failed to get re-elected to the Lok Sabha, in his ministry as an advisor as he knows Akbar has a clout among journalists.

Suresh Mehrotra, a college lecturer-turned-journalist from Ujjain, who was a part of his image-building team in Bhopal, had moved to Delhi early this year as the chief of bureau of the FREE PRESS JOURNAL group of newspapers. Arjun Singh needed someone like a soft-spoken Mehrotra in the INS building, which houses offices of over 60 outstation newspapers, to peddle his stories. Mehrotra, however, found the Delhi press corp too smart to handle. He quietly returned to Bhopal, announcing that he had a bigger task in hand—launch the Bhopal edition of his paper.

He was earlier with THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in Bhopal, again courtesy Arjun Singh. In the Arjun Singh-Madhavrao Scindia tussle for power in Madhya Pradesh, Mehrotra had launched a campaign against Scindia. The latter, however, used his contacts to shut off Mehrotra's twisted political stories. Finding that he had no more use

in the HT [Hindustan Times], Arjun Singh got him shifted to the FREE PRESS JOURNAL.

Soon after landing in Delhi, Mehrotra was on the job to embarrass Narasimha Rao visiting Madhya Pradesh in April, by putting out a story that the governor had sent a report to the Centre recommending dismissal of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] government in the state. The Raj Bhawan in Bhopal immediately issued the denial, but Mehrotra stood by his story. He was only helping Arjun Singh's game plan to paint Narasimha Rao soft towards the BJP government despite the so-called governor's recommendation.

Arjun Singh used his 'operation expose' successfully to expose Narasimha Rao's relationship with the BJP and thus forced him at the Congress(I) plenary at Tirupati to assert that the "non-secular parties" had no role to play under the Indian Constitution. This was a small triumph for Arjun Singh. Earlier, he had expressed his serious misgivings about the economic policy but he did not pursue as he would prefer to revive it at the right time as a part of his policy of disproving, instead of denouncing, the opponent.

If Arjun Singh takes keen interest in the Bofors scandal, it is not for nothing. He has a vested interest. He wants to settle a score with the Nehru dynasty. He had taken the pledge to avenge his father's death in a Madhya Pradesh jail. He holds Nehru responsible for the trap laid to catch his father taking bribe in Delhi. His father, Rao Saheb, was then *ilakedar* of Churhat, a post bigger than zamindar but smaller than raja. He holds Nehru responsible also for the humiliating defeat of his father in the 1952 elections. Rao Saheb was contesting on a Congress ticket. Realising the mistake of giving him the Congress ticket, Nehru called him a cheat and corrupt, and asked the people at a rally not to vote for him.

Arjun Singh does not trust others in matters that concern him the most. He will personally draft his statements, he will personally supervise any election he contests. Take the Congress(I) Working Committee [CWC] elections at Tirupati. He got more votes than Sharad Pawar not because he had better appeal but because he personally took charge of his campaign. The moment the elections were announced, he left the dais and could be seen most of the time moving among the delegates and canvassing for their votes. In contrast to Sharad Pawar, who remained on the dais letting his two bearded supporters campaign for him.

Notwithstanding repeated denials by Arjun Singh, he is getting ready to be a contender for the prime minister's post. A different type of politician, he does not believe in opposing his rivals. He exposes them and exposes them so thoroughly that they give way without even the slightest murmur. One has to wait and watch when and how he plays his 'operation expose' trick on Narasimha Rao even while expressing his "gratitude" for being nominated to the CWC(I), and even while repeatedly hailing Narasimha Rao's statements. His hidden hand will be difficult to detect. He will stand aside as if he had nothing to do with the exposure his journalist friends plant in newspapers. If

the exposure clicks, he is in the saddle as the prime minister. If it fails, he will not be one getting the blame.

Commentary Criticizes Congress Party's Corrupt Ways

93AS0178B Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
25 Oct 92 p 9

[Article by Tavleen Singh; quotation marks as published]

[Text] There has been general disapproval of the Karnataka chief minister's 'achievements mela'. Many of his own party men stayed away from the festivities and Central government ministers, like Margaret Alva, openly expressed their annoyance. In a letter to Bangarappa, she is reported to have said: "A government-sponsored show aimed at projecting an individual is certainly not in keeping with the traditions of the Congress party." Oh really? Think again, Mrs Alva, let your mind wander back to the good, old days when on account of the supposed charisma of the great leader in Delhi all that we ever saw were achievements melas and loan melas and melas of so many kinds that all of political life became a mela. Far from violating the traditions of the Congress party, as we know them, Bangarappa should be considered a proud son of the party.

Where did he get the idea for giant cutouts from if not from the giant cardboard manifestation of Indira Gandhi that appeared one year in the vicinity of India Gate? An amusing sidelight of this particular event was that its appearance coincided with Dussehra so it was not uncommon to see children crowding round in the mistaken impression that this was a new kind of Ravana. By the time Rajiv appeared at the same spot, dressed in Swami Vivekananda turban, a few years later giant cutouts were an accepted part of Congress culture and lesser leaders across the country were busy imitating this new trend.

Poor Bangarappa is a lesser leader in every sense. I have personally had the pleasure of running into him only twice. Once at Goa airport, and once in the house of R.K. Dhawan (an acknowledged patron) and on both occasions I was struck by the fact that he was among the least impressive political leaders I have ever met. He is a skinny, reed of a man whose dark glasses seem to be larger than the rest of him. And, on account of the overwhelming impression that they make, he ends up leaving you feeling as if you had stumbled by accident into the villain of a Bombay film. Can you blame him for wanting to appear, momentarily, larger than life? So, for his achievements meal he made an enormous cutout of himself, planted it between equally large and colourful cutouts of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv and Narasimha Rao and invited the masses to a party. There were singers and dancers and a giant shamiana and, by all accounts, so impressive was this second anniversary bash that the Central leaders who accepted his invitation to Bangalore, returned recommending that he be allowed to keep his job.

The fact that Bangarappa had his little celebration with taxpayer's money is also in the best traditions of the Congress party. This is how it has always been in Delhi, so

why should it be any different in Bangalore? Over the years we have grown accustomed to buses being taken from state transport corporations and used for bringing in rented crowds and for special trains being laid on for the purpose, so who in Delhi can cast the first stone?

Bangarappa has actually done everything by the book. On the day that the festivities were to happen the government of Karnataka paid for large, centrespread advertisements in several newspapers, filled them with pictures of Congress leaders and a much larger picture of CM [Chief Minister] Sahib himself striding into the future in white safari suit and slippers. The text that went with the pictures told us about the miracles that the Karnataka government has achieved. "Innovative. Revolutionary. Dynamic. These programmes have brought about a sea-change in the lives of millions of people in Karnataka. Wiping away tears of deprivation. Bringing tears of joy... The last two years have been successful, rewarding and progressive years."

Everyone knows that the only 'sea-change' in Karnataka is that things have changed dramatically for the worse. Charges of corruption, inefficiency and nepotism have surrounded Bangarappa almost from the time he took over as chief minister, but this makes no difference to the fact that as an old-fashioned Congress leader he believes you can continue to fool all the people all the time. This belief is very much part of Congress tradition.

In the beginning the party could get away with almost anything. For most of the 40 years it has ruled India, it has functioned under the aegis of a 'great leader' and with its reputation for giving the country its freedom as the mainstay. Now, the world has changed but the party continues to plod along much as it has done since Independence.

Bangarappa's bash draws attention to the sad fact that the prime minister has done almost nothing to make the party aware of the realities of life without a so-called great leader at the helm of affairs. In the old days one invocation of Nehruji, Indiraji and Rajivji's names would be enough to put an election rally on the right track.

It no longer is. Now, instead of cardboard cutouts in state capitals the party needs to concentrate on getting its workers at the grassroots level to start working with the people the way they used to in the pre-Independence past. They need to help ordinary people face the difficulties caused by petty officials and the depredations of policemen. Instead, the only place that you see Congress workers these days is at the regular tamashas that take place in Bangalore, Hyderabad or Delhi.

Their place in the villages is being filled steadily by RSS [Rashtriya Swamyamsevak Sangh] workers and it is this simple, little fact and not the processions carrying Rama's slippers across the land, that strengthens daily the position of the Bharatiya Janata Party. If there is a natural disaster somewhere or a crisis of some kind in a village it tends to be RSS workers that you see first in the area. They continue, however, to have certain major limitations since their good works do not extend to people of the Islamic faith. They also have their fascist ideology to live down and have become ineffective in states that are run by the

BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] itself but, nevertheless, they have a better reputation than the Congress worker who tends, in most villages, to be the local thug.

Narasimha Rao is aware of the problem and at the AICC [All India Congress Committee] meeting in Tirupati he urged Congress workers to fan out into the villages carrying the message of the party's economic reforms. But, having said that he appears to have forgotten about the whole matter so that as soon as the meeting was over, party workers went back to functioning in the only way that they know how which is by sucking up to the leader.

This carries on all the way up to the high command itself. At election time everyone knows that it is not the man who has worked hard in the village who will get a ticket but the man who has been a better sycophant than the rest. The pinnacle of this kind of politics is giant-sized cardboard cutouts and mammoth birthday parties. So, why blame Bangarappa?

Meeting of CPI National Council Reported

93AS0154 Madras *THE HINDU* in English
16 Oct 92 p 6

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 15—A fleeting engagement with bourgeois structures, a near "Mandal" scare, and a sharp division on some crucial organisational issues marked the four-day meeting of the CPI's [Communist Party of India] National Council which ended here today.

At least twice, the Council came close to favouring a radical break with the traditional format of the party but the voice of caution eventually prevailed over the more impatient opinion. And contrary to speculation on the eve of the meeting, the "system" emerged without many bruises though the pro-changers did manage to extract some minor concessions.

Distinct identity: A suggestion which, if accepted, would have brought the CPI organisationally closer to the non-Left parties was that the number of office-bearers at the top should be increased and like other parties the CPI too should have posts of president, vice-president and more than one secretary.

However, it was turned down on the ground that the move would seem like imitating the "bourgeois" model, besides triggering a scramble for loaves of office. The majority view was that the party should retain its distinct identity even as it should make efforts to democratise its functioning.

On another occasion, there was a bit of bemused exclamation when several members from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh suggested what looked like an attempt to "Mandalise" the party. They argued strongly in favour of reservation in decision-making bodies for members belonging to the SC/ST, backward classes, minorities and women. Their point was that the composition of the National Council, the Central Executive Committee and the Central Secretariat—three main centres of influence and power—did not reflect the strength of the weaker sections in the party and their contribution to its growth.

The overwhelming opinion, however, was that although there was need to increase the representation of SC/ST and other weaker sections and a mechanism must be evolved to correct the imbalance, "Mandalisation" was not the answer. The Council recommended that a method be worked out to ensure that the party's various constituencies had a fair share in decision-making.

On the crucial question of restructuring the party set-up, the Council was divided down the line with one section favouring a more compact structure and the other side making out a case equally vociferously for retaining the existing three-tier system consisting of the National Council, the Central Executive Committee and the Central Secretariat.

Executive Committee's strength: There was also a view that the size of the Central Executive Committee, which now comprises 31 members and is, therefore, a little unwieldy, should be reduced. A senior member favoured that its strength should be reduced to 15 or 17, and in any case should not exceed 19.

Those who favoured the change pointed out that a smaller body with a more flexible style of working would be more effective than the existing "jumbo-size" Committee. However, the opposite view was that such a move would make decision-making less democratic as the representation of cadre would be reduced. Eventually, the idea was not pursued. Also virtually shelved was the proposal to make it mandatory for the party to have a deputy general secretary. It was decided to retain the existing provision that such a post could be created, if necessary.

The Council has not made any recommendation and the various viewpoints are being communicated to the "ranks" for discussion. A final view will be taken by a special conference on organisational affairs to be held in Trichur, from January 21 to 24.

CPI-M Politburo 26-27 Oct Meeting Reported

93AS0167A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
28 Oct 92 p 6

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 27—Taking into account the changed international and national situation particularly in the last two years, the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has embarked on an exercise to revise the party programme. It seeks to address more sharply issues related to the collapse of the Soviet Union on the global front and emergence of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in the North in the national context.

The two-day meeting of the politburo, that concluded here today, discussed the report submitted by the committee set up to revise the party programme. The Committee was constituted at the party congress at Madras in January.

The report, suggesting changes in the party programme, is to be placed for approval by the Central Committee of the party, which is meeting from tomorrow. The party intends to hold a special congress in February next to give final shape to the changes. According to party sources, the revised programme will address the collapse of the Soviet

Union and the Eastern Bloc, on which the party congress was unable to take a position in January.

The changing national situation, especially the emergence of the BJP in the North and the party's strategy to combat this is another major area where charges might be effected in the programme. The revised programme, according to the sources, will stress the need for identifying and supporting alternative political formations in this regard.

Even though, there is no such mention about the Janata Dal, which could be projected as an alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP, it appears that the CPI(M) is not very happy with the actions of the party on certain issues. However, there is no proposal to part ways with the Janata Dal in the present context. The possibility of the Janata Dal emerging as an alternative is also not being ruled out.

The revised programme is optimistic about newer political formations. The party is considering the possibility of a split in the Congress(I) in the wake of the new economic policy. In this context architects of the revised programme point to the dissenting note that is said to have been placed by the president of the Kerala Pradesh Congress(I) Committee, Mr. Vayalar Ravi.

Similarly, even though it is not going to be mentioned directly, joint action with some of the splinter Naxalite group might find approval in the revised programme. The case of the Indian People's Front, an affiliate of the CPI(ML)—Vinod Mishra group is an example.

In the international arena, the party is expected to reconsider its views on the Soviet Union and its experience in ushering in socialism. It is learnt that those portions in the programme that hold up the experience of Soviet Union to contend that the socialist mode of production is the best will be removed. However, there will not be any basic revision on the merits of socialism.

Paper Reports Four-Day Meeting of RSS Leaders
93AS0166A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 30 Oct 92 pp 1, 13

[Article by Prasun Sonwalkar; quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, October 29—The RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and its front organisations are girding up for a major onslaught on the P.V. Narasimha Rao government and indications are that this will reach its apogee around November-end when the winter session of Parliament would begin, well-placed sources said here today.

Details of the multi-pronged attack on the government has recently been finalised at the four-day meeting of top leaders of the RSS at Ujjain early this week. Tomorrow, the fifth "dharam sansad" (religious parliament) would meet here and finalise the date when the 'kar seva' would resume at Ayodhya. Top religious leaders of various Hindu sects and communities have congregated in the capital for the two-day event.

In the perception of "sangh parivar" strategists, this is the opportune time to put up the "ante" even if it entailed the dismissal of the Kalyan Singh government in Uttar Pradesh. Mr. Narasimha Rao is considered to be too indecisive and shaky within his party at the moment even as the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] is seen as emerging as the principal opposition party. The evolution of a two-party system in the country could be given a boost now, the strategists feel.

Even if the belligerence of VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] leaders like Mr. Ashok Singhal, Mahant Avaidyanath and Swami Chinmayanand sounded repetitive today, RSS sources said an assurance had been given by top BJP leaders to go along fully with the decisions taken by the 'dharam sansad'. This means that irrespective of the political fallout, the proponents of the Ram temple are set to extract maximum mileage from the next round of 'kar seva'. (During the July round of 'kar seva', activity was stopped since the BJP was increasingly being dubbed as a party flouting the provisions of the constitution.)

Mahant Avaidyanath made two significant statements at the end of a meeting of the VHP's Kendriya Margadarshak Mandal today. The VHP, he said, had demanded only three structures, those at Ayodhya, Mathura and Varanasi (and not the thousands as stated earlier). Secondly, he said since the disputed structure at Ayodhya had been a "temple" for over four decades now, no disrespect could be shown to it and there was no question of pulling the structure down. "It will be reshaped and renovated respectfully," he said.

RSS sources said a qualitative change during the next round of 'kar seva' would be the involvement of only "swayamsevaks" (full-time activists) and not the Bajrang Dal activists, most of whom "lacked discipline and proper indoctrination." This would not only help control the intensity of the activity in the temple complex but also prevent unsavoury utterances and incidents evident during the last round of 'kar seva'.

The contours of the "sangh parivar's" offensive against the Rao government is evident from the programmes planned in the near future. Apart from the "dharam sansad," the BJP has announced a "Bharat bandh" on November 3 against price rise. The hardening of postures is expected to be formalised during the BJP's national executive meeting in Bhubaneswar next week while the 'kar seva' is set to resume in November last week, (the senior BJP leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, has already set the tone for the offensive by alleging that Mr. Narasimha Rao is abetting corruption).

By a resolution, the success of the "Ram paduka puja" programme was claimed and kar sevaks asked to be ready to reach Ayodhya as per the programme chalked out. Another resolution urged the leaders of various Hindu sects and communities to beware of alleged Congress designs to divide them. It also called for scrapping of the Uttar Pradesh Hindu Public Religious Institutions (checking misuse of property) Act, 1962. (The state government today clarified that it had withdrawn all orders issued to district authorities under the Act.)

The meeting was attended by 150 members of the Mandal and was intended to a prelude to the larger congregation tomorrow.

In a strongly-worded appeal to the religious leaders, swami Chinmayanand said only the blind and the brainless could fail to see and honour the evidence cited by experts to substantiate the claim that a temple existed before a mosque was built in the 16th century. According to Mahant Avaidyanath, the Muslims had allegedly been given the "veto power" by the government on various important issues and claimed that due to their alleged appeasement they could get away with anything.

Nearly 5,000 religious leaders of various sects and communities from all over the country are expected to attend tomorrow's congregation.

PTI adds: The VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] today threatened to resume the kar seva accusing the Prime Minister of "lacking political will" to resolve the temple dispute even as the government appealed to all concerned parties to refrain from any action which might jeopardise the effort to find an amicable settlement.

The minister of state for parliamentary affairs, Mr P.R. Kumaramangalam, described the VHP threat as "unfortunate" and said the talks to find a solution to the dispute had reached a "critical stage" and any attempt to hinder the process would be deplorable.

Addressing a press conference on the eve of the two-day crucial meeting of "Dharma Sansad," the VHP general secretary, Mr Ashok Singhal, said the kar seva was expected to be resumed in late November or early December. Once kar seva starts it would not stop at any cost, he said.

VHP Plan To Construct Mandir Viewed Unfavorably

93AS0174C New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi
2 Nov 92 p 4

[Editorial: "If Confrontation Can Be Prevented, Then..."]

[Text] The announcement by the religious parliament of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) to start the voluntary work Karseva [voluntary service] on December 6, has again brought the controversial issue of Lord Ram's birth-place to the forefront. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's handling of this issue has already disappointed almost 6,000 religious leaders and sadhus [mendicants] belonging to various Hindu sects. Sant Vamdevji, the chief of the guidance group has said that he visited the prime minister at the request of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders and Mr. Ashok Singhal, the general secretary of the VHP, but even after three months of deliberations the Indian Government has not firmed up a policy to resolve this problem. Therefore, any additional talks with the government will not be useful. The basic reason for VHP's

discontent is the fact that on one hand the prime minister speaks about settling the issue through talks and on the other he issues periodic statements that the government is obligated to preserve the Babri mosque. The religious leaders argue that if the objective of the government is to save the mosque then why hold the talks. The BJP and the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) both seem to support this contention of the religious parliament. This makes some people think that the religious tension in December will be high enough to spark widespread communal riots. In the event that a proper solution is not in sight by then, it is doubtless that riots are imminent. [sentence as published] It may not be easy for the prime minister to overlook his party's election manifesto, but Narasimha Rao is not only the president of the Congress he is also the nation's prime minister. If an acceptable solution is not found in time, he, as the representative of the nation, will have to evaluate the gravity of the situation with its aftermath.

All channels to continue talks, after the religious parliament's decision, are not yet closed. According to Vamdevji, the prime minister will not be permitted any additional time but if the government comes up with a solution by December 6, then the controversy will dissipate. This means that still there is time available to continue talks. The government now has several avenues open to it. It can entrust a judicial commission with the entire issue. But keeping in view the slow progress of legal processes in our country, it is doubtful if any quick solution will emerge. The VHP may also not be willing to wait for long. The Central Government, in its discretion, may however, decide to take control of the three and one half acres of land from the Uttar Pradesh government, and can start constructing the temple on that land. But the Ram Birth-place Committee has firmly refused to make any change in the original location of the temple. Also, to consider appointing any other entity in lieu of the VHP to construct the temple will be an open invitation for trouble. The government is also considering a third option to permit the VHP to perform voluntary work Karseva on the land under its control. As the Chief Minister Kalayan Singh and Mahant Avaidyanath have said continuing Karseva from this point on will take about two years to reach the site of Babri mosque. During this period the prime minister can continue his dialogues. There is no apparent danger in doing so for the next two years. But in any of these options, it is not possible to ignore the third party or the organizations behind the Babri mosque movement. Unfortunately, the localized nature of the Babri mosque has been transformed into a communal issue for the Muslims. That is why all the parties are involved and have contributed in the discussions. Therefore, these Muslim organizations are not in a position to accept any solution where even a resemblance of defeat to the Muslim cause may be perceived. Obviously, the issue has been overcomplicated due to oversight. The price to correct the mistake will inevitably have to be paid. Simply by ignoring the issue we cannot avert the danger.

BJP Said Facing Crisis in Madhya Pradesh

93AS0174A Varanasi AJ in Hindi 20 Oct 92 p 6

[Article by N. Rajan: "Ruling BJP is Getting a Strong Warning"]

[Text] Police atrocities on the residents of the city of Garoth near Mandsore and the serious internal problems confronting the ruling party have unnerved the State administration. The continuing strong struggle for governmental reorganization is causing imminent danger for Chief Minister Mr. Sunderlal Patwa.

A segment of BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] is furious at the recent unparalleled police outrage on Garoth residents. Garoth residents retaliating against the government's decision to form 16 districts by demonstrating for the creation of a new district. Although the Holkars came from the Garoth District, with the creation of Madhya Pradesh in 1956, it was merged with the Mandsaur District. Garoth residents were dismayed at the neglect of their claim in the creation of a nearby district of Nimach.

Garoth, a part of the district of Mandsaur is a BJP stronghold. In addition to Mr. Patwa, Mr. Virendra Kumar Saklecha, a former chief minister, also comes from Mandsaur. Since the Garoth constituency has always elected a BJP candidate for Parliament, and with the BJP in power, Garoth residents had high hopes of their city being named a new district.

An all-party committee, dominated by local BJP leaders, was formed to elevate Garoth to the level of a district. But the special armed constabulary posted in Garoth launched local riots. It is said that women were mistreated, men were beaten, and even students were charged at with batons.

The Congress leaders took immediate advantage of the situation to blame the Patwa government and charged that Garoth was turned into a police Raj. Madhya Pradesh Congress chairman Mr. Digvijay Singh and other Congress leaders led the opposition demonstrations in Garoth. They demanded a judicial enquiry into police excesses on men,

women, and children. Opposition leader Mr. Shyamcharan Shukla warned the Patwa government that the Congress will ask for Central intervention to protect the innocent public.

Mr. Arjun Singh, the Centre Human Resources Minister, has also demanded a judicial enquiry. A committee of the Congress High Command, which visited Garoth on September 21, has also verified the allegations of police atrocities as true. The Chief Minister Mr. Patwa cannot discount these allegations because BJP leaders from Garoth have themselves supported the demand for a judicial enquiry.

Many BJP leaders, Mr. Saklecha and Pyarelal Khandelwal included, have toured the troubled area and believe that the untold atrocities have certainly been committed. Mr. Saklecha submitted a fact-laden report on the Garoth incident to the BJP national secretary Mr. Kushabhau Thakrey. The BJP administration is studying the incident. The State BJP administration is stunned at the organized riots and beatings that took place in many cities including Bhopal and Gwalior during the organizational elections, which are scheduled for completion by the end of November.

It is true, that during the elections for membership to the ward committees, heated exchanges took place but in the Bhopal elections, the opposing leaders hired physically strong men to terrify the opposition. On several instances batons and pistols were openly used.

Senior BJP leaders realized, a little late, that the violence tarnished the party's image. The state's deputy chairman Mr. K.N. Shejwalkar warned that those associated with the violence will not be spared.

The BJP has enrolled 350,000 new members in the State, and of these, Bhopal alone boasts 46,000. This enrollment has brought a large number of new members into the party who are not conversant in the BJP's or Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh's doctrine. Thus observers maintain that the image of the worker-based BJP will be totally different than the BJP based on grass-roots membership.

Validity of Continued Monetary Borrowing Questioned

93AS0174B Varanasi AJ in Hindi 18 Oct 92 p 6

[Article by Ved Agrawal: "Financial Treasury Loan and India"]

[Text] The Finance Minister is back again at the footsteps of the IMF. Manmohan Singh asked the IMF for about 9 billion dollars in loans to meet India's foreign exchange repayment obligations. Specialists agree that to satisfy these commitments India needs 5 to 7 billion dollars in loans. In view of India's near future needs, Manmohan Singh, has however, asked for a much larger loan. He says, in addition to 4 billion dollars representing this year's requirements we also need about 2 billion dollars for the next three years. That is why an amount for the total projected need is being requested now.

Consultations with the Board of Directors of the IMF, indicate that a loan to India in this amount is quite possible. The Finance Minister feels satisfied that he was able to fully convince the IMF of India's foreign exchange needs. He recently traveled to Washington for this purpose. With the desired result in sight it is natural for him to feel happy, but nobody will agree that with the prospect of simply obtaining more loans, the country's economic health will improve. The burden of foreign loans on the country has elevated India to the ranks of as one of the three largest debtor nations of the world. The foreign currency loans may play an important part in maintaining a prestigious repayment history of scheduled payments, but its painful impact persists for long, especially when the obligations constantly keep on growing.

The monies in the IMF do not constitute international funds. IMF funds are made available by the governments of the rich countries. India is also a member country of the IMF and as such it also contributes its share but this share is so paltry that it lets India continue its membership without it becoming a burden. The majority of the funds in the IMF are contributed by the United States, Germany, France, Japan, etc., and as such its management does not follow any democratic norms. All the important decisions are made by countries with high stakes in the Fund. The World Bank also functions on similar principles. Clearly, these rich countries, while granting loans to the borrower nations, consider their own financial requirements first rather than those of the borrowers. They cannot directly dictate any specific financial policies for the poor nations to implement, and even if they do who is going to listen. But when these poor nations approach them for loans, they grab them by the throat and ask them to follow directions to adjust their policies as a condition for loans. India's policy adjustments are also not of its own choice but are directions from the IMF. It is only on this condition that one can borrow from the Fund.

India is already burdened with 80 billion dollars worth of foreign loans, scheduled payments and annual servicing that takes up over one-third of all exports. India spends a major portion of its foreign exchange on items such as mineral oils, food, and vegetable oils and the amount of

Indian exports is comparatively low. Foreign trade, therefore, not only results in losses but is also a cause of constant headache for India. Because the cost of essential imports has to be paid for in foreign exchange it becomes a necessity to wait on the IMF and other foreign countries in the hope of low interest loans. During the last decade the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that borrowing has become essential even to meet the debt requirements of the past loans. Therefore, Dr. Manmohan Singh's successes cannot be viewed as brilliant because the new loans will only increase the future debt servicing costs.

In the last eighteen months India has borrowed about 5 billion dollars from the IMF to meet its foreign exchange loan servicing obligations. To please these international financial organizations and to make them partners willing to lend money, India has implemented their desired changes in its fiscal policies. In their terminology, these [changes] are referred to as economic improvements. It may, however, be noted that it is not the duress of the poor countries to borrow for these adjustments and development schemes but it is necessary for the self-interest of the rich countries to lend money. If a poor country so desires it can plan its economic development successfully within the limitations of its own resources.

Imagine what India would have done in 1990 or in 1991 without the assistance of World Bank or similar other international organizations. Lack of hard currency for its essential import needs could have resulted in the cessation of all imports. But not all imports. It could have bought essential medical supplies, food grains, and necessary machinery with the limited income of its exports. It is true though, that India could not have imported its petroleum needs, TV and VCR parts. Also, parts for air conditioners would be difficult to obtain. This hardship could have proved a blessing in disguise for the country and would have resulted in revamping its economic plans in light of its actual needs guided by the limitations of its resources. This could have reduced the number of private cars, increased the number of buses, and resulted in a restrained use of items of luxury. People would have learned to live simply. But how would it serve the interest of those rich lands whose economic welfare is based on the concept of expensive exports? Use of self-restraint on the part of poor countries will result in a lull in the industrial production of these rich lands. Hence, it is in their self-interest to have the poor countries maintain a continuous foreign exchange reserve. The rich in the lands of the poor also need this cushion to not only maintain their modern standard of living but also to regularly enhance it. This mission is achieved through the World Bank and the IMF.

Any progressive economy in the world has yet to completely succeed in revitalizing its economic base on borrowed money. The reason being that the money obtained is generally spent on consumer goods. And as far as a country's prominence in international circles is concerned, it can only be achieved by its ability to pay for its imports by the earnings from exports. A balance-of-payment situation that has stayed deplorable for India. [sentence as published] Whatever calculations our optimistic finance

minister is stipulating, it can be safely said that the future difference between our exports and imports is destined to rise. It is quite possible that the amount of loans from the IMF and our foreign reserve deposits of 16 billion dollars may not be sufficient to pay for this difference. Hence, it is imperative that the government should not go after borrowing foreign money alone, it should on the contrary, find the ways and means to reduce its reliance on imports. Prudent and thrifty habits will be the keys to save the country from foreign indebtedness.

The type of protest language, that was commonplace within and without government circles up until recently, against borrowing from World Bank and IMF, is even not deemed suitable these days. Unfortunately, the general agreement seems to be on a hypothesis that on the basis of the meager amount of Indian resources, any movement to vitalize the industrial base of the country is not feasible. This leaves us with only two prospects. One, we endeavour to earn a lot more foreign exchange and two, try to obtain foreign assistance or loans in huge quantities. The third avenue is to attract foreign investments. All three approaches have been tried collectively. But considering the low tide in international markets we do not see any possibility of a dramatic increase in our imports. Also, India has not yet reached the status of rich countries like the United States, Germany, and Japan in the realm of international financial circles. In spite of making vigorous changes in past financial policies we have not succeeded in attracting foreign investment in any significant quantity. The new fiscal policy was expected to attract about 2 billion dollars in foreign investments, but it appears that only half of this amount may be subscribed.

Our fiscal policy leaders and specialists do, however, hope that in the next few years India will certainly succeed in attracting large-scale foreign investments. The plan for increased continued foreign borrowing is based on this hope of the future. Also, currently the country carries an immense burden of foreign loans and the cost of servicing these loans has reached dangerous proportions. Because of this situation we are obligated to borrow more and more. We are undertaking this unique step based on the hope that sometime soon we will be able to revitalize our industrial base and will be able to repay the loans with ease.

This option is highly speculative but appears to be a bright ray of hope to our leaders. In so doing the country would have taken a step closer to bankruptcy; the rich would grow richer and more modern; the poor will be forced to live a life of degradation. The administration neither has time to think over these issues nor does it want to consider these concerns. The government seems to be preoccupied with the very thought of leading a life of comfort and preserving its power base for as long as it can. It is this preoccupation which has kept it at arms length in resolving national issues and the concerns of the common man.

Manmohan Singh Eases Pressure on Banking System

93AS0178E Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
25 Oct 92 p 17

[Text] New Delhi—The government will persist with the reduction of statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) and cash reserve ratio (CRR) in a phased manner to help ease the pressure on the banking system and increase credit flow to all sectors.

The Finance Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, told chief executives of public sector banks and financial institutions here on Saturday this step would free resources hitherto preempted by government and thus ease pressure on the banking system.

"The banks, in turn, would then be able to increase the flow of credit to all sectors," Dr Singh said at the meeting convened to examine further steps to be taken to accelerate the tempo of financial sector reforms, improve customer services and revitalise the banking industry by restoring its efficiency and profitability.

Dr Singh said for longer term viability, banks must improve the quality of their loan portfolio. The Reserve Bank of India [RBI] has introduced new prudential norms for income recognition, provisioning of losses, and capital adequacy.

He wanted the chief executives to suggest ways and means on how they proposed to meet these norms by specified dates.

International norms: Indian banks, Dr Manmohan said, must achieve international norms to ensure international credibility of the Indian banking system.

He discounted the impression of a linkage between the economic reforms and the irregularities committed in the financial sector, for which, he said, the deficiencies of management, internal control mechanism and supervision were mainly responsible.

He said there was no substitute for good management and effective supervision.

He also stressed the need of efficient management information system and internal audit arrangements, improvement in the areas of internal management and control.

Customer service: Dr Singh said he was dissatisfied with the existing quality of customer service. "We should aim to have a minimum of 200 modernised computerised branches of nationalised banks in metropolitan cities, comparable to the best in the world within the next few years," he said.

Dr Singh asked the RBI and the Indian Banks Association to discuss the modalities of setting up these branches.

Dr Singh asked the chief executives of banks not to be disheartened by the recent happenings but continue to discharge their responsibilities.

Citing complaints he had received about the inadequacy of credit and delay in getting them, Dr Singh said indecision would only cause greater harm.

The banking system needs to display its resilience and respond to challenges of the times.

He urged them to get back to the business of achieving social and economic objectives.

Think big: Referring to the improvement in the economic situation following the "decline in inflation," increase in bank reserves, Dr Singh exhorted the chiefs to think big and plan ahead for industrial recovery.

The meeting discussed at length the position emerging as a result of adopting the new income recognition, provisioning and, capital adequacy norms prescribed by the RBI.

There was general acceptance by the chief executives that these norms must be implemented if Indian banks were to be as efficient and credible.

This was especially so for banks engaged in international operations as these banks may have to adopt even tighter norms to conform with international practice.

More capital: It was noted that with the shift to more transparent accounting it would be necessary to increase the capital of banks.

Ways and means of raising capital to meet the stipulated prudential requirements were also discussed. The chief executives recognised that given the government's resource constraints it would be necessary to raise capital from the market.

One important suggestion was about the participation of labour in the equity of the bank which would not only mobilise capital but also instil a greater sense of participation.

Suggestions were also made at the meeting that the SLR and the CRR should be reduced in a preplanned manner to 25 per cent and 10 per cent respectively over the next three to four years.

Planned change: The chief executives felt that a pre-planned transition would provide greater certainty to banks in planning for the future.

Dr Singh told the top executives to prepare themselves for supporting the needs of an expanding economy paying special attention to agricultural credit, priority sector lending and the credit needs of backward states and regions.

The minister highlighted that the country's economic prospects critically hinged on the growth of agriculture.

Stressing the need for modernising agriculture and increasing agricultural productivity, Dr Singh said the bank credit system had a vital role to play as delivery of credit was crucial input to the success of agricultural development.

Banks should extend credit to only bankable schemes to be prepared in consultation with them.

Low CLR: Dr Singh expressed concern over the low credit deposit ratio in certain states and directed banks to pay greater attention to credit needs of the North eastern region, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and other backward states and regions.

He cautioned banks however not to advance uneconomic loans which, he felt, would be a disservice to these states.

The Minister of State for Finance, Mr Rameshwar Thakur, who also addressed the executives, said the revenue department would meet with representatives of the banking sector shortly to deal with all matters relating to taxation of banks.

No going back: The RBI governor, Mr S. Venkitaramanan, said there was no going back on the financial reforms and introduction of transparency in accounting procedures. Concealing losses by postponing the implementation of transparent accounting mechanisms would only defeat the purpose of reforms.

He cautioned banks against delay in switching over to transparency in balance sheets and urged them to increase the productivity of resources.

The RBI governor expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of progress on computerisation and redressal of consumer grievances.

He outlined the problems faced by the banking system in improving the services and specifically mentioned that problems in linking the Indian banking system with the international system and the relations between the management and labour.

The meeting was attended by the Ministers of State for Finance, Mr Dalbir Singh, Mr Rameshwar Thakur and Mr Shantaram Potdukhe, and senior officials of the Ministry of Finance. PTI

Commentary Urges Full Utilization of World Bank Aid

*BK1311074992 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 0245 GMT 13 Nov 92*

[Article by journalist Balbir K. Pooch]

[Text] World Bank President Mr. Louis Preston's visit to India, which began on Wednesday, has brought into focus the gradual integration of the Indian economy into the world market, following the liberalization of the financial and industrial system in this country. Mr. Preston's assurance that the bank would provide fast disbursing aid totalling \$9 billion in the next three years will, of course, be received well by India. The amount sought by India under this aid is modest, going by the country's size. It is also a feeling in the bank that if India gets this money and carries out the economic reforms, it will not only be in its interest, but also of the world at large. However, India and the World Bank would have to sort out the problem of quantum of aid and its utilization. The sore point with India is that its share in the total aid extended by the bank

world over, is less than 1 percent. The bank on the other hand has a grudge that India is not able to utilize the aid granted to it. It was against this background that Mr. Preston urged the government to take immediate steps to tackle the problem of unutilized aid, totalling nearly \$20 billion from bilateral and multilateral sources.

The government is indeed aware of the problem of under-utilization of aid. One major problem is that many state governments face fiscal difficulties and do not have the matching resource required. In fact, the real problem is with the power and irrigation sectors. The state electricity boards, unfortunately, do not function as commercial organizations and, therefore, lack financial viability. As a result, they are unable to raise resources that are needed to make use of the World Bank aid. Political will is needed to enforce financial discipline in the state electricity boards and ensure that they are run as commercial organizations. Needless to say that to avail of more help from the World Bank, the government will have to take some hard decisions and also ensure against their possible social and political fallout.

Ministry Announces Special Import License Scheme

93AS0153 Madras *THE HINDU* in English
22 Oct 92 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 21—The Commerce Ministry today announced major changes in the 1992-97 Exim policy by which eligible categories of exporters will be allowed to import, through a special licence scheme, 18 categories of items for commercial sale. The items include gold and consumer electronic goods. The ceiling will be based on net foreign exchange (NFE) earned by the exporters.

Addressing a press conference here today, the Minister of State for Commerce, Prof. P.J. Kurien, said the exporters eligible for special import licence subject to maximum permissible import included the following: Exporters exporting to Asian Currency Union (ACU) mechanism with an entitlement of 20 per cent NFE earnings; Deemed Exports 15 per cent NFE; Star Trading Houses 10 per cent NFE, Trading Houses 7.5 per cent, export houses 5 per cent NFE; and manufacturers acquiring prescribed quality certification like ISO 9000 (series) or BIS 14000 (series) 5 per cent NFE earnings respectively.

According to Prof. Kurien, the annual value of the net foreign exchange earnings of the above mentioned categories of exports for purposes of issuing special import licences has been estimated at between Rs [Rupees] 1200 crores and Rs. 1500 crores.

Freely tradeable: A notification issued in this regard today by the Commerce Ministry stated that the special import licences shall be freely tradeable in the market. These licences shall be valid for import of the following items listed in the negative list of import in the 1992-97 Exim Policy: (1) Gold, (2) Electronic items currently figuring in the negative import list like integrated circuits, devices and chips for clock and time pieces; single sided printed circuit

boards of thickness 0.8 mm and above; double sided printed circuit boards with or without plated through hole; audio magnetic tapes in all forms excluding 35 mm and 16 mm sprocketed tapes; video magnetic tapes in hubs and reels, rolls, pancakes, jumbo rolls in all forms and computer systems including personal computers of CIF [Cost Insurance Freight] value below Rs. 1.5 lakhs or 5000 U.S. dollars, (3) CD Players, (4) Electronic Games, (5) Video Camera, (6) Camcorder, (7) Electronic Camera, (8) Electronic Typewriter, (9) Integrated monocoque buses, (10) Air conditioning units for buses, (11) Diesel generating sets up to 1500 KVA, (12) Electric portable generators up to 3.5 KVA, (13) Spare parts for automobiles and tractors (excluding car airconditioners and audio systems), (14) Button cells, (15) Dry batteries (not based on zinc chloride), (16) Addressing Machine, (17) Compact Fluorescent Lamps and (18) Special items required by hotels, restaurants, travel agents and tour operators as may be notified by the Director General of Foreign Trade formerly Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (CCI&E).

Prof. Kurien said exports to ACU countries which included India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran but excluding Indo-Nepal trade under the ACU mechanism and deemed exports made on or after March 1, 1992, shall be entitled for grant of special import licences. Similar exports made prior to March 1, 1992, may also be allowed this benefit provided the exporters had not received the benefit of exim scrip as per the 1990-93 policy. However, where the payment had been received in hard currency and the exporter had availed of the Liberalised Exchange Rate Management System (LERMS) benefits, no special import licence shall be allowed.

Condition: For Star Trading Houses/Trading Houses/Export Houses the benefit of special import licence for 1992-93 will be admissible on the basis of NFE of the licensing year 1991-92 subject to their retaining the recognition of their status in 1992-93. Similar principle shall also apply for their future claims if otherwise admissible. In the case of those manufacturers who have acquired the prescribed quality certification of ISO 9000 or BIS 14000 special import licences shall be granted in 1993-94 on the basis of NFE earned by them during the licensing year 1992-93.

Article Laments Poor State of Power Sector

BK1811095792 Delhi *INDIAN EXPRESS*
in English 8 Nov 92 p 13

[By Vishal Bakshi: "‘Wheels of Development’ Heading for Bumpier Road”; quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi—The ‘Wheels of Development’, as electricity is called for its vital role in development of an economy, are heading for a bumpier road.

Inefficiency, poor planning, corruption and resource crunch are some of the major reasons for the sorry state of affairs in the Indian power sector. And the driver behind the wheels, Power Minister Kalp Nath Rai, has miserably failed to steer the shoddy vehicle out of this chaos.

The Power sector is plagued by so many problems at every level that it is almost impossible to pinpoint a stage from which the mending act can begin. Poor transmission and distribution system, dismal working of majority of power plants, mismanagement of State Electricity Boards, poor overall planning, shortage of raw materials and a complacent administration have led to a situation where future of power sector seems very grim.

There has been a tremendous increase in the installed capacity from 1,360 MW [megawatts] at the time of independence to 70,000 MW at the beginning of the Eighth five year plan. But the fact remains that the country is still facing a power shortage. India's per capital consumption of power is only 253 kwh [kilowatt-hours] as compared to 4,000 kwh to 17,000 kwh in developed nations.

The Department of Power had recommended an addition of 36,600 MW during Eighth five year plan (1992-97) requiring investment of Rs[rupees]1,27,000 crore but the National Development Council scaled it down to 30,538 MW at an investment level of Rs 79,590 crore. But this target is unlikely to be achieved. Even estimates made at the achievement of this level show that there would be a peaking shortage of 18 percent.

The powers that are in the Department have been repeatedly blaming the highly capital intensive nature of the electricity industry as the major stumbling block for its expansion. The argument can be accepted to only some extent because the Department has only itself to blame for poor planning.

One of the most important areas in the power sector is a well-planned and efficiently run transmission and distribution network. However, this aspect has been low down in the priority list which has resulted in a considerable rise in transmission and distribution losses.

The Power Grid Corporation of India (formerly National Power Transmission Corporation) was incorporated in 1989 to manage power transmission all over the country but had almost nothing to do till a few months ago. The Corporation is now in the process of taking over all the transmission networks from central power generation firms such as NTPC [National Thermal Power Corporation] after World Bank pulled the purse strings.

Another major lapse on the part of the government was neglect of the hydro power sector. A proper hydro-thermal mix required for an efficient and economical power generation system. This is so because the hydro capacity can be used for peak demand while thermal and run of river hydro projects can be utilised for meeting the normal

demand. Till the Fifth five year plan, the hydro-thermal mix was in the ratio of 41:59.

But by 1991-92, this was drastically reduced to 28:72.

At present, the thermal capacity is about 48,000 MW (about 70 percent of the total installed capacity) while the hydro sector capacity is more than 19,000 MW. Studies have shown that economical exploitable hydro-sector potential is to the tune of more than 84,000 MW at 60 percent plant load factor (PLF).

The hydro power has several advantages over thermal. It is not only cheaper but hydro plants also have a longer life and do not cause pollution apart from other operational advantages. Mr Kalp Nath Rai has been repeatedly making statements that hydro sector should be the thrust area but has actually done little so far.

Apart from poor planning at the Central level, the State Electricity Boards (SEBs) have also been responsible for poor performance of the power sector. Though there is a statutory provision of a minimum surplus of 3 percent on net fixed assets, the majority of SEBs are in the red. Consequently, they have become notorious for not making payments to the Central utilities for the power supplied to them. The SEBs owe about Rs 2,400 crore to National Thermal Power Corporation.

But the biggest problem before the power sector is the acute financial crunch. Alarmed by the impending crisis, the government decided to seek private sector participation. There are already some private power plants but their share is only 2,862 MW. The government announced the policy to encourage greater private investment for both generation and distribution in September-October last year.

A two-part tariff system for thermal (coal/gas based) projects was announced to cover the fixed capacity cost and variable energy cost in electricity pricing. The private sector, both domestic and foreign, responded positively. However, not much headway has been made since then. The foreign companies are asking for sovereign guarantee from the Indian Government regarding payments of the electricity dues. They are insisting on such a guarantee in view of the dismal payments records of SEBs. Irregular and erratic supply of raw materials, especially coal, is another major hurdle.

In view of the crucial role that the power has in overall economic development of the country, especially in wake of liberalised economic policies, the power sector has to be managed efficiently and professionally. It would be better if Mr Kalp Nath Rai concentrates more on taking concrete steps for improvement of the power sector rather than making flamboyant statements.

Analyst Examines Gaps in Air Force Structure

93AS0157A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
21 Oct 92 p 8

[Article by Atul Aneja]

[Text] The competence of the Indian Air Force [IAF] evident in the past can be partly explained by its relatively balanced force structure. Despite occasional hiccups, a regular supply of aircraft either in fly-away condition or through licensed production in the country—from the erstwhile Soviet Union—significantly contributed to this stability. In addition, that country supplied India vital ground support equipment such as radars and large quantities of armaments. Moreover, quality leadership in the IAF helped in maintaining a high morale in its skilled workforce.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has affected the supply of weapons to the IAF. As a result, the IAF after 60 years (it celebrated its diamond jubilee on Oct 8) is confronted with a problem: How to fill the vital gaps emerging in its force structure?

An adequate answer to this may lie in a combination of responses anchored in a long term vision of developing an aviation technology base in the country.

However, upgrading, that is, increasing the capability of aircraft by integrating new generation advanced systems on a large section of the IAF's fleet (mainly in the category of fighter aircraft) is becoming the Air Force's pressing requirement. In addition, a consistent drive in pursuit of co-development (which includes transfer of technology) with aviation companies abroad—wherever possible—is requiring the IAF's urgent attention.

Many factors contribute to the vacant areas in IAF's force structure. Of these, the disruption in the supply of spares from Russia for its Soviet-dominated fleet of aircraft and delays by the IAF in deciding on aircraft replacement/upgrading (such as upgrading the MiG-21) seem to be pre-eminent. Moreover, the shortfall in aircraft on account of these factors is reinforced by the shortage of funds as the country's resource crunch begins to bite. Finally, the gaps appear in graphic detail against the integration of qualitatively superior aircraft, purchased/negotiated recently by two of its neighbours China and Pakistan.

Consequently, the IAF's capabilities in performing some of its major tasks, especially interception and transport roles become evident.

The IAF is left with little option but to attempt filling the vacuum created by the serious shortfall imminent in its MiG-21 fleet—so far the mainstay of its interception capability. In fact, out of the IAF's 37 squadrons of fighter aircraft, 17 possess variants of the MiG-21 (2 with Mig-21 Fls, 6 with MiG-21 Ms and 9 with MiG-21 Bis). And this is not surprising as the IAF—being a defensive arm has the foremost responsibility of protecting the Indian skies primarily through interception of enemy aircraft. However, it plays a complementary role of providing limited battle-field and tactical support to the Army.

Among the variants of the MiG-21, the MiG-21 Fls are no longer effective. And the airframes of the MiG-21 M's do not possess additional life. Consequently, they will inevitably have to be discarded by 1994-95.

Further, in the class of MiG fighters one squadron of the MiG-23MF (four others consist of MiG-23Bns) is also showing signs of vulnerability and may require upgrading. Along with the MiG-27s (4 sqns.) and the Jaguars (4 sqns.) the MiG-23s can perform a limited deep penetration strike role. In fact, the MiG-23 is a precursor to the MiG-27, a dedicated ground attack aircraft.

Other fighter aircraft in the IAF's inventory include the three squadrons of the MiG-29s (the MiG-29 is a superb aircraft but is primarily an interceptor), a combination of MiG-25 and Canberras (1 Sqn.), Mirage-2000 (two sqns.) and Hunters (one sqn). The MiG-25 and Canberras primarily perform a reconnaissance role whereas the Mirage-2000 is a multi-role fighter. The Hunters are used as Advanced Jet Trainers, that is, as aircraft to enable conversion of pilots to fly advanced fighters.

In the field of transport aircraft, too, a serious gap is emerging in the strategic heavy lift category. Not all of IAF's 20 strategic airlift planes—the Russian IL-76—are in flying order.

The IL-76, with a haulage capacity of 43 tonnes, transports both men and heavy armament, and has been performing a vital long range transport role.

In addition, the capacities of the AN-32s, the IAF's mainstay in the medium tactical lift class (it has a capacity to carry 6,700 kg. of freight or 30 fully equipped paratroopers) are overstretched. The overuse of this plane—also of Soviet origin—is reinforced by the presence of only a handful of the aging AN-12s which in the past have shouldered the burden in performing this vital role.

In fact, it is learnt that in order to extend the life of the AN-32's, the refurbished engines of the AN-12s are being cannibalised on to them. The idea is to temporarily replace the relatively advanced AN-32 engines to enable them to be refitted later after the life of the AN-12 engines, which have been incorporated, has been completely exhausted. Two regimes of the AN-32s, one with the original engines and another with the cannibalised ones are, thus, being created.

Another significant vacancy in the IAF's inventory lies in the realm of Advanced Jet Trainers (at present, the obsolete Hunters are performing this role). However, the decision on the type to be procured as substitutes is yet to be finalised. In fact, the choice is dangling between the British Hawk and the Franco-German Alpha jet. Apparently, the decision-makers have not favoured the cheaper Czechoslovak offer of the L-39.

In the class of helicopters, there is an urgency for replacing the aging Mi-8s.

When the IAF's inventory is reviewed, finding alternatives for the MiG-21 appears to be the most urgent. More so, because the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) which was

conceptualised as a replacement to the MiG-21—to perform the workhorse role—is yet to emerge.

This leaves the IAF with two options: to re-open the assembly line of the MiG-21 Bis (other versions have hardly any life left) as well as to upgrade the existing aircraft.

Fortunately for India, integrating this equipment on the MiG Bis is far easier than in the earlier design version of the MiG-21. For example, significant upgrade of the F-7—an earlier version of the MiG-21 which China possesses—will require changes in the air frame to include side intakes and replacement of engines as well. On the contrary, the MiG-21 Bis's engines need not be replaced as this aircraft is powered by R-25 turbo jet engines which possess a 9,000-kg thrust.

However, it is not clear whether the IAF has been moving ahead with upgrades despite the presence of an in-house offer and opinion in a large section within and outside to actively pursue this programme.

One area which urgently merits IAF's attention is long-range capabilities. This becomes necessary in the context of acquisition by China and Pakistan of advanced aircraft. Further, there is an argument for the IAF to possess airborne Early Warning (EW) capability.

China has recently acquired, from Russia, the sophisticated SU-27s. These are multi-role fighters comparable in

size and weight to the American F-15 Eagle but with a configuration similar to the MiG-29.

Moreover, in case Pakistan acquires, from France, the Mirage-2000 (the deal has been clinched in principle) it will have an ability to deliver Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missiles.

Consequently, to meet the threats in the Indian skies, the IAF will require equipment to enable air-to-air refuelling—essential if the IAF aircraft have to extend their range and thus a capability to intercept enemy aircraft at longer distances.

Further, it is being left with little option but to energetically push ahead the Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) programme, which is already under way. The AWACS are specially equipped overflying aircraft which can provide advance information to friendly low flying combat planes regarding the aerial battlefield configuration.

And finally a concentration on development and transfer of aviation technology (last year, Russia had offered India co-development for an advanced jet trainer) may become necessary. But it is the inadequate grasp of the importance of possessing an aviation technology base, evident from the indifferent political and financial backing to the LCA, that may become the IAF's biggest obstacle. And if this is so, it may significantly undermine the IAF's ability in combat in a battlefield scenario of the 21st century.

Urdu Said Facing Bleak Future, Lacking Funding

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[Article by Dr Ather Farouqui; italicized words as published]

[Text] The reason why Urdu is almost dead in UP [Uttar Pradesh] today, is that it was from UP that most of the Muslims (and elite class Muslims among them) migrated to Pakistan and those who were left here did not count among the educated people. The poor Muslims, who were studying Urdu in *madaris* before independence are doing this even today in the same way.

It is also a bitter truth that when we use the term Urdu public, a word popular with all, we have Muslims in our mind, deliberately or otherwise. The character of Urdu may be secular. It may or may not be responsible for the division of India. All the elements of its origin including its linguistic structure are Indian. Hindus and to some extent Christians may have contributed to the prosperity of Urdu. Even so, the fact is that in the generation born and brought up after freedom there are few Urdu knowing people, except among the Muslims. When it is rightly or wrongly said that Bihar and south India have kept Urdu alive, what is clearly meant is that the Muslims of these regions have kept Urdu alive because these regions have Urdu schools established and run by Muslims. In Bihar, Urdu has been kept alive by religious institutions which impart knowledge of Islam. If the situation is different in UP, it is because Bihar has thousands of such small institutions while the situation in UP is quite the contrary, even though the students of these institutions after passing their oriental examinations begin to wander unemployed on the roads. As a result the problem became so serious that Urdu had to be given the status of second official language, with many legal complications, by the UP and Bihar governments. The Bihar experience also made it clear that in the present social conditions of Indian society, the status of second language means nothing but employment to a few, because Muslims are backward in every field of life and even the knowledge of the national language is not a guarantee of employment.

During the survey the next question posed to the intelligentsia was whether Muslims would apply the same methods to preserve Urdu as they had been doing to preserve Islam. Most of the intelligentsia did not want to give an answer to this question as it amounted to accepting that Urdu was the language of Muslims. They blamed the Urdu public for indifference towards Urdu. They cited the examples of South India where there are hundreds of Urdu Medium recognised schools although South India has never been the centre of Urdu. In Maharashtra alone, where Muslims have never regarded Urdu as their mother tongue, there are about five hundred junior high schools and high schools.

Several other questions are associated with the question "Is Urdu the language of Muslims alone?" The most important of them is whether Urdu will have a life of more than a decade or so. If we accept Urdu as the language of Muslims, there will hardly be ten per cent educated young

men who may have studied Urdu as an optional subject. Throughout the length and breadth of UP, there is not even a single Urdu medium Junior High School or High School (except Aligarh Muslim University's two High Schools). The plight of even these ten per cent is worse because no college or University Urdu Department in UP holds regular Urdu classes. BA Standard students of Urdu literature prepares class notes in Hindi. The condition of research in Urdu is worse.

Most Indian Universities have opened their doors for research in Urdu. Authentic and standard collections of poems of great poets including Mir and Ghalib are impossible to get, as they have never been published. All the government institutes established for the progress of Urdu are only places of irregularities of every kind and the so-called Urdu intelligentsia go on competing for their membership. The condition of committees fighting for the cause of Urdu is not different from those fighting for Muslim welfare. The sole purpose of these committees is to bargain with the government. The result is that the common man is not ready to cooperate with the committees established for the promotion of Urdu. He has seen people from Dr Zakir Hussain to "Hayatulla Ansari" sold at their own fixed price.

Exception Punjab, the circulation of papers and magazines published in Urdu has come down from millions to thousands and several great magazines are on the verge of collapse. Several have already collapsed. Books in Urdu are published with government aided libraries. They are shut up in the almirahs beyond the approach of Urdu students.

The struggle for Urdu has neither ended nor is it worth while to follow the policies which have been the backbone of their struggle after independence. The Congress forced Urdu to take the last breath and it is being granted the status of a second language at a time when Urdu language and culture is almost extinct. I am using the word Congress instead of party in power as being responsible for the death of Urdu because the Congress has dominated the field most of the time in free India. As the Congress was well acquainted with the condition of Urdu because of its being related to the freedom struggle, it succeeded in murdering Urdu. Moreover the Muslims who opted to live on the promises of the Congress that their religion and culture would be safeguarded, were deceived.

What is, then, the solution? The first solution is that Muslims shall have to undertake a complete change in the syllabus and policies of the *madaris*. The contractors of religion who get startled at the talk of reform in the *madaris* while living on donations and alms will have to reorient *madarasa* education so that those who study in them can acquire a degree of proficiency to live in the contemporary changing world and lead a worthwhile secular existence, while at the same time ensuring a place in the world beyond.

The Aligarh Muslim University, which has done nothing in any real sense to promote Urdu except open an Urdu Department, shall have to arrange to impart education for B.Ed. and M.Ed., etc., with Urdu as medium as done by

Jamia Millia. Throwing away the shell of empty slogans of the so-called greatness of Urdu, the University will have to be bold enough to face reality and will have to promote courses of study in a way that Urdu gets its due place in reality. Urdu is taught there as a compulsory subject even today, but only on paper. There is no place for Urdu in the life of the University.

The Muslims of UP must keep in mind that Urdu was being granted the status of a second language not as token of affection for Muslims but for some compulsions facing the then Prime Minister in the next General Elections for the Parliament. Muslims should also understand well that Urdu is getting its due on account of changing social circumstances. The generation that has come forward in educational and social life since independence is no longer prepared to carry the burden of blame for the formation of Pakistan and is keen to demand its cultural rights. Thus the government or semi-government institutions set up to promote Urdu cannot be said to be responsible for the promising situation in which Urdu finds itself. What these institutions did in the form of Promotion of Urdu, they did at the behest of the government in order to deflect the Muslim attention. Whatever promise the language has owes itself to the strength of the community of its speakers.

Under the circumstances, so far as the question of the future prospects of Urdu is concerned we can conclude with reasonable certainty that it is precarious. For, after becoming associated and identified with Muslims in India, the responsibility for keeping Urdu alive has come on the shoulders of Muslims. The community's capacity to play a creative role in this connection has been greatly circumscribed. Because of the ambivalent attitude of the Muslim leadership the situation of Muslims in the country is itself fought with complexities, what to speak of the situation of Urdu. There is also a remarkable dearth among Muslims in India of such voluntary associations and organisation which can be expected to preserve and keep alive a language in adverse and difficult situations. It is difficult to offer a precise formulation about the future of Urdu, but it is certainly possible to suggest that the future of Urdu is likely to very largely depend upon the attitude of Muslim religious organisations, South Indian states and the Muslims of Bihar. Personally, I do not see a bright future for Urdu in South India, Bihar and those regions which are today regarded as the new linguistic and cultural centres for Urdu. Except, for a few large cities of South India which are the traditional centres of Urdu, it would be unwise to mortgage the future of Urdu to South India and Muslims of Bihar. Continuing their predisposition towards oversimplification, Urdu intellectuals are often inclined to assert, while discussing the future of Urdu, that north Indian Muslims have dug the grave of Urdu and now it will survive either in Bihar or in South India. The matter is not quite so simple. Urdu has been spoken in South India only to a limited extent and that too in a few select big cities. Therefore, the question of its gaining popularity beyond these traditional centres will remain an open question.

As a language associated with Muslims, Urdu has been a victim of the same step-motherly treatment by the government to which Muslims in India have been subjected. One

of the consequences of this has been that in comparison to other communities, particularly other minority communities, Muslims have been rendered particularly backward and Urdu virtually on its way out. Yet another misfortune of Urdu has been that after independence Muslims in India could not develop the courage to wage a struggle for Urdu. Urdu occupied a low priority among the issues raised by Muslims after independence. For a long time Muslims kept indulging in self-deception that Urdu will be protected by the secular pre-independence born non-Muslims and the Punjabi migrants from across the border. As this self-deception also began to fall apart, the Muslims in India now live by the hope that Urdu will live on in South India and Bihar. How fake is this anticipation can be gauged from the fact that the Muslim missionary organisations like the Jama'at-i-Islami has adopted the policy of rendering religious books for north Indian post-independence born Muslims in Hindi and as far as possible in the regional languages in South India. Where the local dialects are not advanced adequately for religious literature to be published in them, and this includes Bihar, Urdu is depended upon for publishing religious literature. In other words, even in South India, Muslims are not willing to adopt Urdu as the language of religious propagation. Thus, the use of Urdu even for missionary purposes is restricted to only those areas where the use of Urdu involves no possibility of language controversy.

The situation today is different. Today, Hyderabad and other states are no longer present to patronise Urdu. Further, what will be the linguistic scenario of South India and what linguistic issues will raise themselves is difficult to say at present. Religions, language and regional identity have taken many turns and twists during the last half a century. East Bengal was separated from India on the basis of religion, but after the emergence of linguistic and regional conflict the break-up of Pakistan is not more than two decades old. Equally, to expect a predominantly rural and backward state like Bihar to perpetuate and protect Urdu, dominated by an elite ethos, would be unwise.

Through reorganisation of religious educational institutions (*Madaris*) which are present even today in substantial numbers in north India, not only can Urdu be saved but the pace of spread of education among Muslims can be accelerated. This process of reorganisation can also be extended to other parts of India. Through linking the system of *Madrasas* to an influential all-India religious movement like *Tableeghi Jama'at*, the network of such schools can be utilised for promotion of Urdu. However, this would call for great courage. Linking Urdu education to *Madrasas* would also not call for substantial resource mobilisation. It would also be easy to relate the large majority of backward Muslims to education in the name of religion. The problem of reorganisation of *Madrasa* education has been a subject of discussion among Muslims at all levels for nearly a century and the efforts are unlikely to meet with resistance. On the whole, thus, in today's secular India, the guarantee of Urdu's future survival paradoxically depends upon its ability to rely on religion and religious institutions.